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LETTERS

ON

MATERIALISM

AND

HARTLEY's THEORY

OF THE

HUMAN MIND,

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ON
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AND

HARTLEY's THEORY

OF THE

HUMAN MIND,

ADDRESSED TO

DR. PRIESTLEY, F. R. S.

"He who does not fooliſhly affect to be above the failings of huma-
"nity, will not be mortified, when it is proved that he is but a man."

Preface to Prieſtley's Experiments on Air.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. ROBINSON, PATER-NOSTER-ROW, AND
M. SWINNEY, BIRMINGHAM.

M,DCC,LXXVI.

265. j. 199.

TO

THE REVEREND DR. PRIESTLEY,

SO JUSTLY ADMIRED
FOR HIS EMINENT ABILITIES AND
INDEFATIGABLE LABOURS,
IN EVERY LEARNED AND VALUABLE
PURSUIT:
TO WHOM NATURE HATH KINDLY UNVEIL'D
HER HIDDDEN MYSTERIES,
WHILST SHE FONDLY MARKED HIM FOR
HER OWN HISTORIOGRAPHER;
THE FOLLOWING LETTERS,
AS THEY ARE ADDRESSED,
SO ARE THEY,
WITH THE GREATEST RESPECT,
INSCRIBED,
BY HIS SINCERE ADMIRER,
AND MOST OBEDIENT,
HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

Winsley, August 12, 1776.

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LET-

LETTERS ON MATERIALISM AND HARTLEY'S Theory of the HUMAN MIND.

LETTER I.

REVEREND SIR,

THE liberty I take, in addreſſing this and the following letters to you, requires, I hope, no apology; becauſe it is you, who have lately revived the almoſt antiquated notions of *Materialiſm*, and it is under your auſpices, that Dr. Hartley's *Theory of*

 the

the Human Mind hath appeared in its preſent abridged, though more pleaſing form. To your warm recommendation that Theory owes its great increaſe of credit with the public: You thereforeare anſwerable for the truth of its principles; you are anſwerable alſo for any bad effects it may produce on the minds of its admirers. But ſhould that ſyſtem contribute to eſtabliſh on a firmer baſis the intereſting cauſe of virtue and truth; it is but fair, you ſhould receive the due tribute of praiſe, and that your brows ſhould be now prepared for thoſe laurels, which future generations will undoubtedly decree you.

The calling to a ſeverer ſcrutiny either your own aſſertions, or Dr. Hartley's principles, will by no means affect their real merit; it muſt even contribute to enhance their luſtre, value and importance. Error alone and falſhood retire from the light; truth boldly preſents itſelf, and hath nothing to fear from the moſt minute and rigid examination.

I am aware of the difficult taſk, I engage in, at leaſt with regard to Hartley's theory; I am

I am aware alſo of my own inability, which appears doubly great, when I reflect with whom I am contending——with Dr. Prieſtley. Yet my attempt, will not, I truſt, be deemed either vain or preſumptuous; it would be ſo, did I at all aim to put myſelf upon a level with you. My intention is, modeſtly to advance the ſentiments of other able philoſophers in oppoſition to yours, and where they ſeem to preponderate, freely to condemn your doctrine. Such a conduct can be never diſpleaſing; it muſt even pleaſe *you*, for "all, who are enemies of *free enquiry*, are enemies of truth." You well know the author of that obſervation. All acrimonious and ill-natured reflections ſhall be carefully avoided; becauſe, I am ſure, the cauſe of truth is not in the leaſt thereby benefitted; though I might aptly enough inſtance the example of a man, who in a late *Examination* was very bitter. Still metaphyſical ſubjects, naturally too dry, demand ſome little animation of ſtyle, conſiſtent with decency and good-breeding.

It may be ſaid with regard to the doctrine of *Materialiſm*, that you have barely expreſſed your thoughts in a dubious manner; that you

only ſuſpected it might poſſibly be, that man was nothing more than organized matter, and conſequently that his future exiſtence in another ſtate was to reaſon alone purely problematical. But whatever *your* internal ſentiments may be; I know, your ſuſpicions have by ſome men been raiſed into poſitive aſſertions, and from thence hath *Materialiſm* been by them adopted, as a tenet no longer to be controverted. Celebrity itſelf, Sir, becomes even hurtful to the poſſeſſor, when his bare doubts, or caſual expreſſions, are by weak minds erected into axioms and firſt-rate truths. In points of mere ſpeculation, it matters little what is either ſaid or thought; but where the moral conduct of many is concerned, too great caution cannot be uſed. I am ſenſible, had you been aware, when you ſaid, that "man had no hopes of ſurviving the grave, but what are derived from the ſcheme of revelation," that from thence one crime more would be committed in the world, or one act of virtue omitted, you would have been the laſt to have hazarded ſuch an aſſertion, though you had judged it philoſophically true: for we have been informed from unqueſtionable authority, that "your education

cation was ſo ſtrict and proper, that the ſlighteſt immorality gives you a ſenſation, which is more than mental."—The queſtion hath been aſked; what could have been your motive in advancing an aſſertion, you knew *might be* productive of evil, and which alſo you knew was *moſt probably* falſe? You alone, Sir, are able to make a ſatisfactory reply. You have alſo been told, that when that aſſertion fell from your pen, you could not poſſibly have reflected, that Dr. Joſeph Prieſtley had publiſhed *Inſtitutes of Natural Religion.* The neceſſary connexion between a future ſtate and natural religion is ſo palpable,—but of this more ſhall be ſaid in due time.

You was not, I dare ſay, at all ſurpriſed, when you beheld the effects, that aſſertion produced on the minds of the public. It was a kind of electric ſhock, which inſtantly pervaded a wide and extenſive maſs, even of heterogeneous diſpoſitions; and perhaps I may add with too much truth, that you ſmiled at the conceit of yourſelf being the prime conductor of ſo great a concuſſion. Even on the ſuppoſition, that the long adopted notion of *natural immortality* had been grounded on mere

ſurmiſe

ſurmiſe or prejudice, the philoſopher, who aims at being thought the friend to mankind, would not attempt to eraſe from the minds of the multitude a prejudice, which contributed to promote virtue and reſtrain vice, unleſs he were able in its ſtead to ſubſtitute a truth, which would infallibly tend, with greater ſucceſs, to effect thoſe two grand purpoſes. Tell me, Sir, what have you erected in the room of that barrier to vice, the certain proſpect of a day of retribution, held out to us by reaſon, which you have laboured to overturn? The denunciations, indeed, of Revelation ſtill remain firm and irrevocable; but where was the harm, that reaſon alſo ſhould contribute ſome little to the ſame important work? Believe me, the good and the virtuous will never applaud your undertaking, and ſurely the *Reverend* Dr. Prieſtley would feel "a ſenſation next to ſhuddering," at the acclamations of the bad and the profligate. Pardon a reflection, which the love of virtue mechanically extorted from me.

In conſequence of your notion of material ſouls advanced in the preliminary *eſſays* to Hartley's theory, and of the warm ſanction, that

that notion received from the authors of the *London Review*, you was called to an account by Mr. Seton, who in a letter addreſſed to you in that periodical publication, warmly, though modeſtly, expoſtulated with you on its impropriety and evil tendency. It was natural to expect that ſo pertinent an addreſs would have rouſed your ſenſibility, and extorted a reply. Nothing of the kind happened; unleſs we are to conſider a letter, which appeared in the ſame *Review* of September laſt, as really Dr. Prieſtley's, and therefore as intended as the only and beſt reply to Mr. Seton's animadverſions. 'Till I have it from unqueſtionable authority, I will never offer ſo flagrant an indignity to your ſo juſtly admired abilities, as to ſuppoſe you the author of it. But as no other anſwer hath hitherto appeared, nor have you, as your honour required, ever publicly reprobated that trifling and inſidious production, we are authorized to eſteem it yours, or, which nearly amounts to the ſame, to conclude that it came forth under your tutelage and kind protection. In this light I muſt therefore conſider it, and ſhall with propriety make ſome remarks on its contents in the regular courſe of my correſpondence. Your

Your *Examination of the doctrine of inſtinctive principles*, maintained by the Drs. Reed, Beattie and Oſwald, which you gave us in the courſe of the laſt year, I read with the greateſt ſatisfaction; I was highly pleaſed to ſee a doctrine ſo triumphantly thrown down from its uſurped empire, which had, within a few years, gained an aſtoniſhing aſcendency over minds, that ſhould have been aware of its fallacy and erroneous principles. But doctrines of every denomination, however falſe and flimſy, when advanced with confidence and effrontery, will ever meet with friends and admirers. Notwithſtanding the warmeſt approbation due to your performance, it was too evident from many incidental hints and expreſſions, that you meant to prepare our minds for ſome bold aſſertion, and that inſinuations alone ſhould not ſatisfy you.—As for your heterodox notions in theological matters, which it is well known you had long ſince adopted, and which you omitted not to mention in your *Examination*, they concern neither me, nor any man elſe. Your ſyſtem, or (to uſe your own favourite expreſſion) your *ſcheme* of faith, is no rule to me; nor do I mean at all to enlarge your contracted creed

with

with any articles of my own, or of any other ſet of men. Let each one adopt that mode of faith, he thinks moſt rational and analogous to his own ideas and diſpoſitions; nor let him therefore quarrel with his neighbour, who chuſes to think otherwiſe. Theſe are the true, and only true, reformation principles. —But when ſentiments are advanced, cloſely connected with moral conduct, each man ſhould take the alarm, if he ſees the cauſe of virtue liable to be injured; he ſhould do what lies in his power, to ſtem the progreſs of ſuch baneful ſentiments. It is in this diſagreeable point of view I have conſidered your notions on *Materialiſm*, and the doctrine of *Neceſſity*.

On Dr. Hartley's *Theory of the Human Mind from the principle of the aſſociation of ideas*, which I mean principally to examine, becauſe I eſteem it an object of the greateſt importance, I can now only obſerve, that I hope to be able to ſhew, that it is not true in its *univerſal* application, as exhibited by the Doctor and yourſelf. At the ſame time I hope alſo to demonſtrate that your favourite Theory is little ſuperior to the doctrine of *inſtinct*, with

regard to the chief objections alledged againſt the latter.

On your recommendation, I have perufed Hartley with the greateſt attention, of which I am capable. I am not even aſhamed to ſay, that I have read him four times over. I ſoon perceived he was not an author to be run over in a few hours, *à tête reposée*, as the French expreſs it; and as, from the firſt reading, I had entertained a deſign of conteſting ſome parts of his ſyſtem, it was neceſſary, I well knew, to conſider it maturely. I now truſt, I can ſay without vanity, that I underſtand him thoroughly. In his doctrine of *vibrations*, and therefore of *aſſociation*, I had been long initiated, from having read a French work, which appeared ſome years ago, (*Eſſai analytique ſur les facultés de l'ame*) by Mr. Bonnet of Geneva. This ingenious and learned author, ſo well known in the literary world for his various and elegant productions in the Philoſophical walk, ſets out on the ſame principles as Dr. Hartley, but ſenſible of their almoſt infinite extent, if diſcuſſed *analytically*, only applies them to one of the human ſenſes, the *ſmell*, and from thence

thence gradually riſes, through a ſeries of metaphyſical enquiries and obſervations, to the moſt intellectual operations. From the ſame premiſes, it was natural theſe philoſophers ſhould draw the ſame inference: they infer that every mental proceſs is a mechanical effect, and therefore that all *free election* in man is a chimerical and uſurped prerogative; in other words, that man is no more a free agent in the real ſenſe of the term, than the ſtone, I throw from me, which goeth, and then returns to the common center of gravitation.

The evil tendency and philoſophical abſurdity of this mechanical ſyſtem, however high, even in point of moral influence, you and Dr. Hartley, with other Neceſſarians may raiſe it, I hope to be able to evince in a clear and ſatisfactory manner. Could any thing indeed induce me to believe the doctrine of mechaniſm, it would be this aſtoniſhing phenomenon in the world of man, that different rational beings, endowed with almoſt equal capacities, and whoſe minds may be ſuppoſed as little biaſſed by the force of vulgar prejudices, as may be, ſhould ſtill adopt, on the

very ſame ſubject, ſentiments ſo diametrically oppoſite. It ſhould ſeem, the fatal influence of heterogeneous *aſſociations* is alone equal to ſuch diſcordant effects.

From the doctrine of neceſſity, which ſeems the inevitable conſequence of Hartley's and Bonnet's principles, if adopted in their *full extent*, I began to ſuſpect ſome years ago, when I was almoſt an enthuſiaſtic admirer of the Genevan philoſopher, that ſuch principles were not to be admitted with an implicit confidence. I knew falſhood could never originate from truth, and I knew that man was free. Still I could never prevail on myſelf to anathematize principles, ſo juſtly analogous, in many reſpects, to the phænomena of the human mind: by them alone was laid open the wide field of *ſenſations*, *ſenſible ideas*, *memory*, *imagination*, and every other mental evolution, wherein it was not neceſſary for man to *act*, or to be denominated a *free agent*. No other ſyſtem, either of Deſcartes, of Malebranche, of Leibnitz, or even of Locke, was half ſo ſatisfactory. If then I ſhould be able to preſerve Dr. Hartley's principles, as far as may be requiſite, and withal maintain the grand prerogative

tive of man, *liberty*, I ſhall be more than amply rewarded for the many hours of cloſe application I have given to the ſubject. But rather than reſign my freedom, I am ready to immolate at her ſhrine the moſt dear and faſcinating ſchemes of a Hartley, a Bonnet, or even a Dr. Prieſtley. You will laugh, I know, at my wild enthuſiaſm; but why ſhould you, if it be the *neceſſary* reſult of the aſſociated ſyſtem of my brain?

Some have lamented, as Profeſſor Beccaria of Turin is ſaid to have done, not long ſince, over the ruins of Dr. Franklin, that he had quitted the ſtable world of nature for the fluctuating one of politics; they lamented that you alſo had deſerted the once favourite purſuits of experimental philoſophy, and had entered on the dry, and comparatively unintereſting, ſcenes of the metaphyſical world. It appears, however, that ſuch apprehenſions are groundleſs; for we ſtill continue to be entertained and improved by your phyſical diſcoveries, not leſs perhaps, than if your mind had not been turned to other diſquiſitions. I wiſh we could ſay as much in favour of Dr. Franklin;

lin; but alas! how aptly may we now apply to him thoſe verſes of Horace to Iccius,

- - - - Quis neget arduis
Pronos relabi poſſe rivos
Montibus, ac *Thameſim* reverti,
Quum tu coemptos undique nobiles
Libros - - - - Socraticam et domum
Mutare loricis - - - -
Pollicitus meliora tendis?

I allow with you that, ſpeculations on ſuch ſubjects, as Dr. Hartley hath treated, tend greatly to enlarge the mind, by filling it with ideas, ſo noble, and ſo far elevated above the level of common life and manners. Yet in ſuch purſuits great moderation is requiſite, leſt the mind too freely rove, and idly indulge itſelf in the airy wilds of fancy, to the neglect of real ſcience and uſeful improvement. Many are inclined to think that the public, in general, is more indebted to Dr. Prieſtley for his phyſical diſcoveries, than for all he either hath done, or may continue to do in his metaphyſical, or even *religious* enquiries. But in theſe, as in all things elſe, each one judges according to his own ideas and attachments.

If

If it ſhould be aſked, why I have choſen to communicate my remarks in ſeparate letters, I can aſſign no other reaſon, than that ſuch a mode of conveyance pleaſed me beſt. I addreſs them to you for the reaſons before aſſigned, and becauſe by thus having you continually in view, I ſhall be in leſs danger of digreſſing from the points, I propoſe to examine. They are only ſuch, as appeared chiefly exceptionable, in your preliminary eſſays, and in Dr. Hartley's theory, as it ſtands in your late edition of that work. I mean to be as conciſe, as poſſibly I can, and as clear, as ſuch intricate and myſterious queſtions will allow: it ſhould however be remembered that, metaphyſical diſquiſitions neceſſarily riſe above the level of common obſervation and experience.——Farewel.

Feb. 29, 1776.

LETTER

LETTER II.

REVEREND SIR,

THE doctrine of *Materialiſm*, in whatever light conſidered, hath an unpleaſing aſpect, and the effects it produces, if it produce any, muſt be ever of a more or leſs deleterious quality. It may be viewed either as the ſyſtem of the libertine, or of the philoſopher. The libertine adopts the notion of matter being the ſole exiſting ſubſtance, that he may thence infer that he himſelf is nothing more than an organized machine, and therefore that the powers of death to him are infinite, whoſe ſway reaches to every being of the creation. He ſays, the ſtrength of death is indiſcriminately exerted in mouldering into one common heap of duſt, the *whole* remains of an oiſter or a Newton. This he hopes will be the end of all things; at leaſt his favourite ſyſtem tells him, it may be ſo.—The philoſopher, who with you, in innocence of heart, embraces *Materialiſm*, is inclined to it from the reflection, that a being of infinite

nite power might have endowed a maſs of matter, ſuch as the brain in man, with ſuch exquiſite powers, as ſhould be ſufficient to produce all the phænomena of *mind*, from the ſimpleſt ſenſation to the moſt complex and exalted intellectual operation. He is not alarmed at the thought, that on this ſuppoſition, the whole man *naturally* becomes extinct at death, becauſe he hath been taught "to found all his hopes of a future exiſtence on the Chriſtian doctrine of a *reſurrection from the dead*." This, nearly in your own words, is an epitome of your belief on this ſubject, or at leaſt of what, you are "rather inclined" to believe. But, ſhould this be the caſe; on what is the poor philoſopher to reſt his future expectations, who either, like a Socrates of ancient times, hath not been inſtructed in the *ſcheme* of revelation, or who, at this meridian period, hath ſo far diveſted himſelf of vulgar prejudices, and dared to think, as to place even that ſcheme in the common groupe of human and fallible inventions? Such a one muſt deſpondently ſurrender every thought of ſurviving the grave, becauſe his reaſon tells him, he is of ſome "uniform material compoſition," and that ſuch a compoſition

muſt finally ceaſe, when its component parts are diſunited in death:—The firm believer therefore of the Chriſtian diſpenſation ſhould feel, even on the ſcore of *Materialiſm*, the ſtrongeſt incitements to gratitude; and we now ſee, why Dr. Prieſtley ſhould be additionally grateful, for having been "ſo ſtrictly and properly educated."—As the firſt ſpecies of *Materialiſm*, juſt deſcribed, is too ſhocking to find many admirers, or at leaſt, as it is not that, you have countenanced, I ſhall paſs it by, and only conſider that, relatively innocent, ſentiment, which you, as ſome of your friends emphatically expreſſed themſelves, have *dared* to advance. You ſee, Sir, I am diſpoſed to treat you in the moſt ingenuous and friendly manner. Yet of this doctrine alſo the dangerous and evil tendency to me is evident.

From the moſt authentic hiſtories, ancient and modern, of all nations, even of the moſt barbarous and unenlightened, it appears, that the notion of *ſome* future ſtate, to be perpetuated after death, had univerſally diffuſed itſelf, and been deeply impreſſed on the minds of men. What may have been the particular ſentiments

ſentiments of ſome great geniuſſes, I care not; for all ages have had their *diſſenters* from the popular belief; nor does that circumſtance at all invalidate the general fact. Whether this dogma originally emaned from divine inſpiration, and ſo was a part of the primitive religion communicated to our firſt progenitors, or whether it was a truth of a natural order, eaſily diſcoverable by the light of reaſon, can not at this diſtance of time be determined. Which ever was the caſe, you have told us in your *Inſtitutes of Natural Religion*, that the belief of a future ſtate is *now* to be ranked in the claſs of *unrevealed* truths, and it is to you, Sir, that I addreſs myſelf. —For my own part I am ſtrongly inclined to think it the reſult of human inveſtigation, from conſidering, how imperfectly the doctrine of future exiſtence is delivered in the revealed word of the old teſtament, if even it be at all to be found there; and conſequently the general belief could hardly have ſprung from that obſcure ſource. The ſilence of thoſe divine volumes on this important head is, you know, by many able men ſuppoſed to argue a previous belief of futurity generally eſtabliſhed, and therefore any ſcriptural men-

tion of it became unneceſſary. But if that belief was originally theodidactic, it was derived from oral inſpiration, never preſerved in writing; yet why was it not preſerved, if unaſſiſted reaſon could never arrive to the probable knowledge of a ſtate, the belief of which is, on all hands, allowed to be ſo intimately interwoven even with our preſent happineſs? Suffice it then to know that, mankind had adopted the notion; a notion, which the founder of the Chriſtian faith came principally to eſtabliſh on a firmer baſis, to point out its proper object, and to lay open the means, by which the poſſeſſion of laſting happineſs in that ſtate might be ſecured. He ſaw how much the general faith had, in the long courſe of many ages been clouded over and corrupted by the influence of vice, and ignorance, and folly; how much the proſpects of another world, by the wild fancies of the poets and inventions of idle men, had been loaded with ludicrous ſcenes of happineſs or miſery; he knew alſo the attempts that had been made by the ſcholars of the Materialiſt Epicurus and others, to eradicate the faith of a future exiſtence from the breaſts of mankind. To reform theſe abuſes, and to fix the

the belief of futurity upon the more immoveable baſis of divine authority, was a principal motive for the coming of the Meſſiah. But then his deſign was not to caſt away every other proof; he meant to enlighten and to add greater ſtrength to, but not to invalidate the dictates of reaſon.

If your reaſoning be juſt, that becauſe revelation hath ſecured our immortality, therefore all other proof of it is ſuperfluous and nugatory; it follows alſo, that all the points of *natural religion* are to be diſregarded, becauſe the Chriſtian diſpenſation hath enlarged our faith, and taught us a more perfect code of laws. But then, Reverend Sir, the hours you gave to the compilation of your *Inſtitutes* were ſpent indeed to little purpoſe. However the fact is, that neither natural immortality, nor the precepts of the natural law in general, are made void by the light of Chriſt; they are thereby additionally confirmed, and from thence in a double capacity can challenge our belief, and practical obedience.

What opinion would you be willing we ſhould form of the man, who, with all the gravity

gravity of philoſophy, ſhould tell us, and aſſert it as his ſentiment, that the exiſtence of a ſupreme being, as drawn from the arguments of reaſon, was no more than probable, and that he was "rather inclined to think" there was no God; he might add, that his aſſertion could not alarm any one, becauſe the Bible alone was a ſufficient proof of his exiſtence? Such a man, I think, though interiorly, perhaps, convinced of the probability of his opinion, could not by you or any one elſe be deemed over-prudent, or a particular friend to ſociety. The reaſon would be, that ſuch an aſſertion, grounded at the beſt only on probable argument, muſt be hazardous; as likewiſe that the belief of a God, of a juſt and wiſe ſuperintending providence, was ſo greatly conducive to man's happineſs, and to the encouragement of virtue and hindrance of vice, that it could not by every rational means be too ſtrongly inculcated. But is it not equally evident, that the belief of futurity, is deeply fraught with the ſame happy influence? If ſo, the philoſopher who aims by any means to weaken that belief, may be juſtly conſidered in the light of the raſh and miſanthropic man juſt mentioned.

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Materialiſm is therefore of dangerous tendency, becauſe it contributes to darken the proſpects of futurity; becauſe it unbinds the reins to vice, confirming the libertine and the unbeliever in their bad opinions and incredulity; it is therefore alſo inimical to virtue; finally it overturns the whole fabric of natural religion, becauſe its injunctions can no longer be enforced, when the profeſſors of it are told, that the ſame will be the ultimate fate of the virtuous and vicious — utter annihilation.

There was a time, Sir, when the religion of nature, that is, the religion, which reaſon unaſſiſted by divine guidance, had promulgated, was the belief of nearly all the world; it is now alſo the only religion of many people and nations; and there are to be found, even in the heart of Chriſtendom, men, who are rather inclined to reject all revealed principles, nor have we any reaſon to think, they are not ſerious, and rationally juſtified in their own minds in their profeſſed incredulity. To theſe unnumbered multitudes of paſt ages and the preſent, to many of whom, it is much to be hoped, virtue was pleaſing, and vice odious; had

had an apoſtle been ſent from your ſchool to announce the doctrine of *Materialiſm*, to tell them all muſt end with death, he would not, I think, have been kindly received; they would ſcarcely have decreed him a ſtatue, as to their friend and benefactor.

There appears in your preſent behaviour a degree of inconſiſtency, not eaſily accounted for. It is this; that you, who are ſo glorioufly buſied in eſtabliſhing the kingdom of *reaſon* over inſtinct, bigotry and enthuſiaſm, ſhould wilfully deſtroy with one hand what you raiſe with the other. For if reaſon in every purſuit, natural and religious, is appointed to be our guide, as you are willing to make us believe, why ſhould it be excluded from the ſingle caſe of immortality? On the evidence of revelation, ſay you, is this article ſolely to reſt. You are not fond, I believe, of blindly bowing to the mandates of authoritative power; for it ſeems you have eraſed from your creed. not only ſome of the thirty-nine articles, but alſo particular points, which are generally thought to be clearly contained in the written word of God. In this indeed you may act as you pleaſe; but you may not be incon-

inconſiſtent, and be blameleſs.—You may by this time be ready to tell me, that I am idly waſting myſelf in pure declamation, and that what I have ſaid merits not the leaſt attention from a philoſopher, who is clearly perſuaded that *Materialiſm* reſts upon the ſtrongeſt probable arguments, to ſay no more.—But ſtill I ſhould not be ſatisfied for the reaſons above aſſigned, were this really the caſe.

You add, that the preacher, or timid moraliſt, may be alarmed at the imaginary view of evil to ariſe from the propagation of ſuch a *truth*; yet that "we ſhould never diſſemble any truth, for fear of its conſequences." ---Let us then ſee what pretenſions *Materialiſm* may have to be ranked amongſt *truths*.

It hath been the opinion of ſome philoſophers, and in particular of Mr. Locke, (though in this gentleman it ſeems to have been a paſſing doubt) that for any thing we can know to the contrary, *matter* might by the Deity be endowed with a capacity of thinking. Whether they underſtood that, this *capacity* or *faculty* of thought ſhould be made to ariſe from matter, in the ſame manner, as

do its common properties, and therefore be eſſential to it; or only, as Mr. Locke expreſſes it, that it ſhould be *ſuperadded* to matter, and therefore be conſidered rather as a diſtinct individual ſomething, than as a property or even mode of matter, at preſent ſeems difficult to determine; nor is it indeed very material to know what their opinion was. With regard to yourſelf alſo it is not eaſy to inveſtigate your preciſe meaning. Would you wiſh us to believe, Sir, that every ſpecies of matter, in every form and in all circumſtances, does really think, that is, hath ſenſations, ideas, &c. in the ſame ſenſe, as it poſſeſſes the ordinary properties of extenſion, ſolidity, &c? or do you reſtrain this privilege to certain ſyſtems of matter, of a particular organic conſtruction, ſuch as the brain in man and animals? The latter, I imagine, is your opinion. But, I own, when I read the paſſage, wherein this doctrine is advanced, (p. xviii. of your firſt eſſay) I am ſtupid enough not to underſtand it. The paſſage is: "So now that we ſee the laws and affections of mere matter are infinitely more complex than we had imagined, we may by this time, I ſhould think, be prepared to admit the *poſſibility* of a maſs

a maſs of matter like the brain, having been formed by the almighty creator with ſuch exquiſite powers, *with reſpect to vibrations*, as ſhould be ſufficient for all the purpoſes abovementioned (to generate all the modes of ſenſation and thought;) though the particulars of its conſtitution and mode of affection, may far exceed our comprehenſion." If you really then think that, every proceſs, termed mental, in man, is in fact nothing more than ſo many diſtinct *nervous vibrations*, then I readily grant that matter may think, for undoubtedly every ſtretched cord, when touched, will vibrate; and I will farther grant, that a fiddle, in that ſenſe may likewiſe be ſtiled a thinking ſubſtance. But if this be the caſe, it is idle to make ſuch a fuſs about it, and ſo ſeriouſly to require that the Deity ſhould interfere in the conſtruction of ſuch a machine, or to tell us, that from the late diſcoveries made in chemical operations, we have now reaſon to conclude that matter is infinitely more complex in its properties, than was before imagined; ſince to produce any number or variety of *vibrations*, we can poſſibly deſire nothing more than ſtrings of a different length and thickneſs. Theſe, with a proper

degree of tenſion, and arranged in a communicative order with one another, when moved by their reſpective plectrums, will produce all the phænomena of ſenſation or thought, from thoſe of the humble emmet to the ſublime contemplations of the renowned Dr. Prieſtley. A vibratory or tremulous motion, you know, muſt always take place, when a cord, whoſe conſtituent particles are not in actual contact with each other, is ſtruck at either end, or otherwiſe agitated. In all this, certainly, there is nothing very wonderful, nor any neceſſity of ſuſpecting matter to be gifted with extraordinary properties, of whoſe exiſtence we juſt begin to be ſenſible.

It ſhould appear then, that "you are rather inclined to think" ſomething elſe; that you think—but, upon my life, I cannot diſcover either from the paſſage, I have cited, or from the whole tenor of your three eſſays, that your meaning can be poſſibly any other. Therefore that *thinking* is ſomething more than a mere tremulous motion communicated to a nerve or a bundle of nerves, ſhall be ſhewn hereafter.—

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In the mean while I beg leave to turn aſide, for a few minutes, to a gentleman, who, in the London Review of September laſt, made his appearance in quality of your Squire or Sancho Panza, and whoſe curious epiſtle may therefore be conſidered as containing a full delineation of his maſter's ſentiment. You will not, I truſt, from that ludicrous idea at all infer that, I mean to compare your Reverence to a knight errant; far be ſuch an indecent thought from me; but I will add, and I deſign it for a ſerious compliment, that your late atchievement in ſo boldly aſſailing and utterly diſcomfiting the three Scottiſh tyrants, and reſcuing from their iron hands the beautiful damſel, they had raviſhed and confined, was a work, not to be paralleled in the annals of the knight of the woeful figure.

As your friend profeſſes to enter upon his enquiry "on the grounds of *phyſical experiment and obſervation*," I will endeavour to follow him through all his curious reſearches. Never, I believe, was naturaliſt ſo unnaturally engaged!—I allow then, in reply to his firſt queſtion, that therefore I entertain the notion that man is compoſed of two ſubſtances, ſo eſſentially

eſſentially different as body and ſpirit, becauſe I ſee him capable of acting in a *voluntary* manner, of which mode of action *inanimate* bodies I judge to be incapable: the action of ſuch bodies I alſo judge to be a mere mechanical effect.—He then aſks, from whence *animation*, and the *power of volition* are derived? And, not pleaſed with the common idea, of their ſpringing from an annexed ſubſtance, of a nature totally different from matter, reſolves the knot, by aſking another queſtion; whether the moſt *inanimate* and *unorganized* bodies are altogether ſo inert and paſſive, as that by proper organization they may not be capable of acquiring the power of volition, *i. e.* the power of being affected by motives not merely mechanical? That is, in other words, whether matter, in a diſunited and unorganized ſtate, totally diveſted of all animation and power of volition, but barely capable of action and re-action, may not by the mere *juxta-poſition* of parts, riſe into life, and begin to act from the influence of moral motives? I will anſwer for it, no metamorphoſis of Ovid, of men and women into trees and rocks, or even of dragon's teeth into men, was half ſo wondrous and incredible; though

though the laſt example bears ſome reſemblance to it. He endeavours to illuſtrate this ſtrange tranſmutation by adding, "that before the invention of clocks and watches, or other machines, it muſt have appeared as incredible that bits of braſs or ſteel could ever, by any combination, be brought to indicate the hours, &c. as it is now to us, that morſels of aliment can acquire by organization the power of voluntary motion. The firſt was effected, why may not then the ſecond? —I bluſh to repeat ſuch puerilities. Does he not reflect that, in the firſt caſe, a peculiar combination of parts is alone ſufficient; but in the ſecond, that the morſels of aliment, beſides a new arrangement, muſt alſo conjure up new powers of feeling, of thought, and of volition, whereof, as he allows, no ſeeds are to be found in their unorganized diſhabille. For the future where will be the difficulty in conceiving, that ſomething may in a like manner ariſe from nothing? It is not therefore merely becauſe we do not underſtand how ſuch a power can be conferred, by bare appoſition, on matter that we recur to an imperceptible adjunct to explain the faculty of *volition*, as your metaphyſical friend

ſeems

ſeems ſhrewdly to fancy, but chiefly, becauſe the ſole ſuppoſition of ſuch a myſterious change is marked with the broad characters of *palpable abſurdity*.

With pleaſure I accompany your diſciple in his next remove, and applaud his philoſophy, as long as he is ſatisfied with aſſerting that, matter is not that inert, paſſive ſomething, poſſeſſed of nothing but of length, breadth, and thickneſs, as generally repreſented. Matter, in all its parts, I allow to be as *active*, as he can poſſibly deſire. I will even go farther, and aſſert that, if matter is not active, it is nothing; for a ſubſtance, purely paſſive, would be at beſt a uſeleſs and unneceſſary lump in the creation; and a ſuppoſed *poſitive* really made up of *negatives*, could ſcarcely, I think, by the moſt ſubtle logician be raiſed above the line of non-entities.---Thus far then we both agree. But when he tells me that, the *neceſsity* of introducing into man an immaterial ſubſtance or ſpirit aroſe from the notion of all matter being *eſſentially* inert, I muſt beg leave to *diſſent* from him.---You will applaud me, Sir, for that ſtep.——Some writers indeed have adopt-

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ed that amongſt other arguments; but no one, that I recollect, ever reſted his reaſoning againſt the *Materialiſts* ſolely on that precarious footing. Philoſophers, who view the whole material world, as by the hand of infinite wiſdom impregnated with life and action, have always conſidered ſuch reaſoning as flimſy and highly inſufficient.

To this point we have advanced gravely enough; but a few lines further, when ſpeaking of the oppoſition cauſed by two bodies meeting in adverſe directions, he ſays, "ſuch an oppoſition may not improperly be called a *mechanical ſpecies of perception*," or, "that two inanimate or unorganized bodies, in colliſion, *perceive* the preſence or force of each other;" I defy the callous fibres of the moſt gloomy metaphyſician not to diſſolve in laughter. It is however unkind barely to allow them this curious ſpecies of *perception*, and at the ſame time refuſe them all *irritability*, or powers of feeling pain or pleaſure: but this, he adds, is owing to the want of a nervous ſyſtem, in conſequence of which, "they can neither ſee, hear, ſmell, nor taſte each other." Still as he continues to reſolve

their *perceptive* powers into a ſpecies of univerſal *touch*, (by the bye there can be no touch without irritability) who can tell, how far they may be ſwayed by paſſions in the various modes of percuſſion from various bodies? By a hard and uncouth blow they may be rouſed into all the horrors of rage, or be ſoftened into the charms of love by the gentle preſſure of ſome fair hand.—But I muſt beg you, Sir, to clear up one difficulty for me relative to this ingenious ſyſtem. As your friend gives perception to bodies in colliſion or contact, yet denies them all nervous ſyſtem, by what means, do you conceive ſuch perception is generated? Evidently not by *vibrations*, becauſe there is no fibre to vibrate: In what manner then? The ſolution of this problem might perhaps lead to greater diſcoveries, than is at firſt ſuſpected; it might even greatly contribute to overthrow the whole ſtructure of Dr. Hartley's vibratory ſcheme

Animation is always underſtood to give the *power* of feeling, but not *actual* feeling, in circumſtances, where the organs are either diſordered by ſickneſs, or locked up in ſleep; but

but in the latter ſtate our feelings are often very exquiſite. At all times, however, when man may be ſuppoſed to be in a ſtate of *inſenſation*, then this ſhrewd metaphyſical naturaliſt inſiſts, that he is not different from a clock or any other mechanical automaton. If he only means to ſay, that whilſt he does not actually feel, he is inſenſible, I freely grant all he can deſire. But in ſuch a ſtate man cannot be juſtly compared to a watch; becauſe, remove the obſtacles to ſenſation, and he will begin to feel; which proves at all times his ſuperiority to the mechanical automaton. The animal functions will, I own, ſoon ceaſe, if ſenſation be long ſuſpended; becauſe thoſe powers ſeem to have been made mutually dependent of each other: an animal, whoſe bodily functions ſhould continue to act, and who at the ſame time ſhould be permanently inſenſible, would be indeed a very uſeleſs and lumpiſh being. Such a being, by my conſent, your friend might freely rank in his favourite claſs of automatons.—What he means to prove from the example of ſome inſects, living and moving after the loſs of their heads, I cannot pretend to ſay: Indeed the whole paſſage is ſo very

obſcure and deſultory, it has quite exhauſted my patience.—At length he reverts to the old marvellous ſtory, that from the mere combination of elements, ſimply reſiſting and inconſcious, may ariſe "the faculties of ſenſation, perception, reflexion, and *will*, the teſt of all the others." "It was not therefore without reaſon, adds he, that Hobbes and ſome others have imputed an *imperfect* ſenſe or perception to particles of unorganized matter." What ſay you to this again, Doctor? Will you allow *perception*, where no vibratory motion can be raiſed?—The mere citation of ſuch *bizarre* conceits is an ample refutation of them.

Now for the firſt time our author begins to bluſh. "They, ſays he, (Hobbes and his aſſociates) went too far, indeed, in calling it (the *imperfect ſenſe*) a *conſciouſneſs*; as conſciouſneſs implies a ſpecies of ſelf-knowledge, that is obtainable only by a compariſon between the percipient body and the body perceived; which is not to be obtained by the faculty of *ſimple perception*, but only from reflexion, or the faculty of comparing different perceptions with each other, of which it is not

not pretended inanimate corpuſcles are capable. At the ſame time it does by no means follow, that a combination of ſuch corpuſcles may not form a conſcious and intelligent compound." *Braviſſimo!*

For my part now, I own, I cannot ſee wherein Mr. Hobbes is reprehenſible: for, where there is *perception*, there certainly is *conſciouſneſs*; otherwiſe it becomes *perception unperceived.* But whatever he may eſtabliſh with regard to the inconſciouſneſs of his individual elements; he ſhould not forget, that in colliſion or contact, (and in the preſent ſyſtem of univerſal gravitation it is very difficult for a body not to be in contact ſomewhere or other) according to his own philoſophy, all bodies muſt be ſtrictly *conſcious.* This affection, indeed, he maintains, is only attainable by a compariſon between the percipient body and the body perceived; but he has juſt before determined, "that two inanimate or unorganized bodies, in colliſion, *perceive* the preſence or force of each other." If this *mutual perception* is not enough, on which to ground a fair compariſon; why, ſuch bodies muſt be ſtupid indeed!---One thing more

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in the above paſſage I muſt not paſs by, becauſe, I ſincerely hope, you will ſeverely chaſtize him for his inattention. He has the audacity to aſſert, that *conſciouſneſs* is not attainable by the faculty of *ſimple perception*, but only from *reflexion*; when at the ſame time, he knows, or ſhould know, that both you and Dr. Hartley have eſtabliſhed *ſimple perception*, as the only real affection, of which the human mind is ſuſceptible. This one faculty, you maintain, compriſes the powers of ſenſation, reflexion, memory, will, underſtanding, &c.---If now, to make matters even, you would agree with him in aſcribing *perception* to ſticks, and ſtones, and plumb-puddings; and he adopt your ſentiment of perception being the ſole and univerſal modification in the ſenſitive and reaſoning line of beings; then, Sir, what a charming ſcene would riſe before us! Blocks of marble and lumps of clay conſcious of exiſtence, and reaſoning on the powers of percuſſion, or nature of elaſticity, or general laws of motion!

Come we now to a paſſage equally curious, if not more ſo than any as yet mentioned. It is a definition or deſcription of thought. "That thinking,

thinking, obſerves our Naturaliſt, is nothing more than the ſenſe or perception, which our *internal organs* entertain, of the difference or relation, between the different perceptions of the *external organs*, has nothing in it inconſiſtent or contradictory; and that, what we call *mind*, as Dr. Prieſtley juſtly obſerves, is nothing more than the ſyſtem of our *internal organs*, is equally conſiſtent." Both equally conſiſtent truly! and what may alſo rank in the ſame line of *conſiſtency* is, that your friend and philoſopher profeſſes to advance in his enquiry, "ſolely on the grounds of phyſical experiment and obſervation."---Whilſt you, Sir, perhaps, are more pleaſingly engaged, really as a naturaliſt, in examining the effluvia of a bit of charcoal, or thoſe of a rotten mouſe, I will juſt diſſect this curious deſcription of thought, and lay its members before you.

The *internal organs* are the brain; the *external ones*, the five ſenſes, of hearing, ſeeing, ſmelling, taſting and feeling. The brain hath its perceptions, proper to itſelf: the five ſenſes have alſo each their appropriated perceptions. *Thinking* then is barely the perception,

ception, the brain entertains of the difference ſubſiſting between the perceptions of the ſenſes, or of the relation, that may be amongſt them. For inſtance, the noſe perceives a ſmell, and at the ſame time the tongue perceives a taſte; the brain perceives the difference or relation betwixt theſe two perceptions: that perception in the brain is *thinking*. But if this be ſo; the brain never thinks about what paſſes within its own regions; it merely buſies itſelf in the concerns of the ſenſes. Yet, you know, what a buſtle both you and Dr. Hartley make concerning all ſenſations being conveyed up to the brain, which alone you will have to be the ſeat of all affections. The ſenſes you conceive as ſo many inlets.---Our naturaliſt hath omitted to inform the public, whether, as each ſenſe perceives, it is not alſo a brain, in its own little way, and conſequently thinks: that is, each ſenſe thinks about the perceptions of its brother ſenſes. About its own it cannot, by virtue of the definition. It may likewiſe, occaſionally, take a peep at what is going on above ſtairs in the brain. The difficulty is only to conceive how they get their information. I ſuſpect not without paſſing through

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the brain; and if that be the caſe, the brain may at once as well be made the only ſeat of thought; as it undoubtedly would never let the organ *ſmell* go through to enquire what was *perceived* in the organ *touch*, at the great toe, without ſtrictly informing itſelf of each particular perception.

As then this new ſyſtem of thought ſeems to have been formed in haſte, and to be incomplete, it would be more adviſeable for its fabricator to call it home for the preſent, and return it to the public with large additions and emendations.—How far you may be conſiſtent in determining the *mind* to be nothing more than the *ſyſtem of internal organs*, ſhall be conſidered in due time. At all events, the applauſes of ſo extraordinary a genius, as the Naturaliſt, on whom I am animadverting, muſt be very flattering to a man of nice ſentiment and honour.

He is ſtill reſolved to puſh on his phyſical reſearches: he adds; "The abſurdity of ſuppoſing a ſimple unorganized being capable of thinking is flagrant; if it thinks, it muſt neceſſarily have previouſly acquired an idea,

or object of thought. It cannot think about nothing, and ideas are to be acquired only by means of the organs of ſenſe." Never, I believe, was ſuch flagrant nonſenſe uttered by a man, who hath the ſmalleſt pretenſion to the name of a philoſopher! By what metaphyſician was it ever aſſerted, that the ſoul of man may think, independently of all corporeal concurrence? In its preſent ſtate of union, it hath organs ſufficient for every ſpecies of thought: viewed as a diſtinct or inſulated ſubſtance, it is gifted with powers of acting, but their exertion is dependent of the body. In this light the philoſopher contemplates the human ſoul.

Were it not too rigid to require of ſuch a writer, that his *internal organs* ſhould connect the contents of one page with another, I would beg him to compare the laſt paſſage with the deſcription of thought, we have juſt examined. According to that deſcription, the work of thinking commences, as ſoon as the brain perceives the perceptions of the ſenſes, that is, as ſoon as the ſenſes perceive; theſe perceive, as ſoon as impreſſions are made on them: therefore the brain muſt begin

begin to think before it can have acquired an idea or object of thought.—The whole myſtery is that, in thinking, ideas and the perception of them are a ſimultaneous or concomitant proceſs.

I beg to be excuſed from any farther examination of this curious epiſtle. In my remarks on the paſſages above cited, I might have been much fuller and explicit, but, I truſt, enough has been ſaid. Indeed, had not that letter been cried up as a maſter-piece of metaphyſical compoſition, I ſhould never have thought it worth my while to trouble either you or myſelf with any criticiſm upon it. How groundleſs and even falſe the report was, which gave it to Dr. Prieſtley, as its author, I am now clearly convinced. But you certainly, Sir, ſhould have publicly diſowned it.—It contains other things, which, it may be ſaid, I ſhould not have neglected. Some of them are foreign from my preſent object; others are merely ſuppoſed confirmations or illuſtrations of the main aſſertion, extracted from the lucubrations of the *Monthly Reviewers*. Whatever elſe there may be

worth notice will fall under general conſideration in the courſe of my obſervations.

My object in this letter was to point out the bad tendency of *Materialiſm*, as alſo to ſhew that, nothing can be more abſurd than that doctrine, as exhibited by its warmeſt admirers. Should it be ſaid that ſome of my reflexions are too acrimonious; my reply is that, writers, whoſe ſole aim is to delude and impoſe, merit the ſevereſt treatment. Or I will ſay, which perhaps may be more pleaſing to your fellow-labourer in philoſophical experiment, that by the perceptions of his internal organs ſuch correſpondent perceptions were raiſed in mine, that I was poſitively *neceſſitated* ſometimes to be angry, and ſometimes to laugh.——Farewell.

P. S. I take this occaſion to acquaint your ingenious friend, that a minute deſcription of the apparatus, by which he made his ſingular obſervations and experiments on the nature of thought, &c. would be moſt gratefully received by an inquiſitive public.

March 6.

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LETTER III.

REVEREND SIR,

HAVING ſhewn in my laſt letter, in a manner, I think, you cannot altogether diſapprove, that *Materialiſm* in every acception is fraught with a dangerous tendency; as alſo that it is philoſophically abſurd, in the light it hath been repreſented by its greateſt admirers; I muſt now purſue my chain of ideas, and endeavour to demonſtrate that, abſtracting from any abſurdity derived from its mode of repreſentation, it is neceſſary to admit in man, beſides the brain, a ſubſtance totally different from it. On this hackneyed, but ſtill intereſting, ſubject, I greatly wiſh it were in my power to advance any thing, that might pleaſe, either in point of matter, or mode of expreſſion; but that, I fear, is impracticable. We ſeem long ago, on ſome

ſubjects,

ſubjects, which lie out of the reach of phyſical inveſtigation, to have arrived at the term, fixed to human enquiry. This thought, however, too favourable to indolence, and obſtructive to diſcovery, will not be readily admitted by the philoſopher, who conſiders *truth* in general to riſe in an infinite progreſſive ſeries, and who alſo flatters himſelf that the powers of genius are analogouſly proportioned to it. The idea is grand and pleaſing, but I have my ſuſpicions, that there are certain barriers, which in this life man may never paſs.

To fix myſelf more cloſely to the ſubject, I muſt beg leave to extract from your firſt *Eſſay* the remarkable paſſage, which hath already been ſo often copied, and ſo much talked of. "I am rather inclined to think, ſay you, that though the ſubject is beyond our comprehenſion at preſent, man does not conſiſt of two principles, ſo eſſentially different from one another, as *matter* and *ſpirit*, which are always deſcribed as having not one common property, by means of which they can affect or act upon each other; the one occupying ſpace, and the other not only not occupying

pying the leaſt imaginable portion of ſpace, but incapable of bearing relation to it; inſomuch that, properly ſpeaking, my mind is no more *in my body*, than it is in the moon. I rather think that the whole man is of ſome *uniform compoſition*, and that the property of *perception*, as well as the other powers termed *mental*, is the reſult (whether neceſſary or not) of ſuch an organical ſtructure as that of the brain."—The diſcuſſion of the matter contained in theſe lines will afford, I ſuſpect, ample ſubject for the letter, I am engaged in.

If it can be proved that ſolitary matter is incapable of producing the mental phænomena, it at once becomes neceſſary to admit the exiſtence of a ſubſtance, diſtinct from matter. This I muſt now attempt.---*Matter* may be conſidered either in its elementary detached principles; or in a ſtate of coheſion, as in bodies in general; or as formed into a regular and organized ſyſtem. But in theſe three ſtates it is equally unſuſceptible of mental powers or operations. By theſe *powers* and *operations* I underſtand, what is generally meant, the faculties of ſenſation, perception, reaſon-

reaſoning, and voluntary motion. The terms *powers* and *operations* I ſhall uſe indiſcriminately.

The elemental particles, of which all bodies are compoſed, may be conſidered either as *homogeneous*, or as *heterogeneous*; as ſimple monads, uncompounded and indiviſible, or as compounded, and ever diviſible. Though the idea of homogeneity and eternal diviſibility to me appear highly abſurd and unphiloſophical, and conſequently the oppoſite notion of elemental unity and variety, in an aſcending and deſcending ſcale, to be adopted, when it is neceſſary to determine for either ſide of that once much litigated queſtion; in the preſent diſpute it will ſuffice to ſhew that, ſuch elements in every ſentiment are incapable of receiving mental faculties. Indeed there are few *Materialiſts*, I believe, ſo ſanguine as to extend the privilege of thought or feeling to thoſe embryo beings; yet perhaps they are not ſufficiently aware, that nothing contributes ſo much to the firm eſtabliſhment of any ſyſtem as the cautious ſecuring of the baſis, on which it is meant to be erected. Either then each individual element muſt be gifted

gifted with the powers of thought; and ſo matter, through its almoſt infinite range, be capable of thinking; or elſe this ſurpriſing faculty muſt be reſtrained to a determinate number of them. But in either caſe, ſuch beings, if ſuppoſed *ſimple*, according to my philoſophy, will be juſt ſo many individual minikin thinkers: nor, on this ſuppoſition, will it be matter that thinks; becauſe matter, in every ſentiment, is a compounded ſubſtance, whereas ſuch elements are uncompounded.—If theſe elements be not ſimple, but diviſible for ever and ever; it then ſeems impoſſible that they ſhould ever poſſeſs the powers of perception, or indeed any other property whatever: for where can a faculty be made to reſide, when the ſubſtance deſigned to receive it, does not ſo much as enjoy *individual* exiſtence? But that the faculties of thought or perception cannot adhere to a compounded being ſhall be rendered more palpable, when we come to view bodies a little more fixed and ſubſtantial, than are firſt principles or elements.

Nothing then, it appears, can be determined relative to the perception or imper-

ception of the material elements; becauſe in one caſe, if they perceive, they are found to be ſo many *ſouls*; and in the other, they ſeem quite deſtitute of every thing. Yet this point moſt undoubtedly ſhould be fixed before we advance in our enquiry; for as all bodies, even the moſt perfectly organized, are a collection of particles, and can poſſeſs nothing but what the parts have, and is derived from them, you will find it, I ſuſpect, very difficult to maintain the ground, you have ſo daringly ſeized, unleſs this preliminary point be ſettled. Therefore, Sir, now is the moment to determine. Either the component elements of bodies, as ſuch, are endowed with the high powers of perception, or they are not: they are barely gifted with thoſe properties, which are neceſſary for them, to carry on, in a more humble, but not leſs uſeful, way, the buſineſs of material agents, in producing the various effects and various phænomena of nature?—But I ſee you are rather inclined to think, that only aggregates or bodies are equal to perception; and among theſe, ſuch only, as have received a particular organical ſtructure, as the brain in man and animals, or perhaps ſome parts of vegetables,

nearly

nearly approaching to the brainy ſubſtance. However, to proceed in order, I muſt ſay ſomething on bodies in general, becauſe I mean to leave no outlet, by which the ſubtle *Materialiſt* may eſcape. Indeed the gentleman, whoſe philoſophy I criticiſed in my laſt, after the example of his friend Hobbes and ſome few others, heſitates not, you remember, to allow a ſpecies of what, he calls *imperfect ſenſe* or *perception*, to all bodies, however groſs and unorganized. Their ſyſtem muſt not paſs unnoticed.

If all bodies from the rugged rock down to the humble pebble, and even bits of unvegetating wood, and lumps of clay, may be thought to feel or perceive, (the imperfection of the ſenſe matters nothing) what idea are we to form of ſo wonderful a phenomenon?--Rather than admit ſuch a ſyſtem, I ſhould be inclined, for my own part, to enlarge the curious family of Cudworth's *plaſtic natures*, and allow one of them to each of the juſt mentioned ſubſtances. But it would be deemed cruel perhaps to confine aerial beings to offices, ſo taſteleſs and unamuſing. Nor, on ſecond thoughts, does it appear that, their cloſeſt at-

tention could at all be rendered ſerviceable. Let all bodies then perceive and feel for themſelves, if they be able.

In the firſt place ſuch perception is inadmiſſible; becauſe no affection can be generated, where no nervous ſyſtem is allowed to exiſt, and, according to the hypotheſis, the ſpecies of bodies in queſtion are unorganized. This reaſoning, I am confident, *you* will think juſt.---Secondly, where in the body is this perception to reſide? Either in all, or in ſome particular part: if in all the parts; there will be as many perceptions, as parts, which, according to ſome philoſophers, are infinite. If in ſome one particular part; ſuch part becomes a percipient individual: but ſuch an individual is not the *whole* body; conſequently the whole body does not itſelf perceive; which is however the grand *quæſitum*.

The firſt caſe, of all the parts perceiving, is additionally abſurd, when we reflect that, infinite or many perceptions are ridiculouſly ſuperfluous, where one will ſuffice; and, I ſuſpect, a ſingle perception in each ſtone or pebble

pebble would amply ſupply all their poſſible exigencies.---Thirdly, it is highly unphiloſophical, it is even childiſh, to aſcribe to any being a capacity or property, which evidently muſt be uſeleſs in the line of exiſtence, it is deſtined to fill. But of what poſſible uſe to unorganized and inanimate matter can be any ſpecies of perception, unleſs thereby it become conſcious of, and enjoy the ſweets of exiſtence? Yet, according to thoſe philoſophers, and your friend in particular, ſuch bodies, even in the act of perception, "are incapable of irritability, of feeling pain or pleaſure."—Believe me, Sir, it is not from any jealous or hard-hearted diſpoſition, that I thus ſtrenuouſly maintain the cauſe of poſitive inſenſibility againſt the material part of the creation: No, could reaſon allow it, I ſhould be moſt ſincerely happy, that every being partook of a bleſſing, which by communication is no-ways diminiſhed: though I much fear, in the preſent prevailing ſyſtem of things, could the ſtones, we tread on, feel, that the ſum of their painful would far exceed their pleaſurable ſenſations.---From what has been ſaid, bodies, in general are incapable

of

ſtance of the brain, to which the ſoul is principally united, you determine to be a mere mechanical effect, the tremulous motion of a nerve, in nature no otherwiſe diſtinguiſhed from the nerve itſelf, than as the ordinary vibration of an extended cord is diſtinct from the cord in motion. The almoſt infinite variety in our perceptions gives you no trouble, becauſe you conceive the brain to be an inſtrument of the moſt exquiſite ſtructure, juſtly proportioned to, and ſuſceptible of all poſſible impreſſions; as the air itſelf, for inſtance, is capable of tranſmitting different vibrations, even at the ſame inſtant of time, without limitation. As it cannot be otherwiſe, but that various *aſſociations* muſt be gradually formed between the various vibratory motions of various fibres; this will explain, ſay you, all the different ideal affections, and all the mental phænomena. How uſeleſs indeed, on this ſuppoſition, is the exiſtence of any ſubſtance in man ſuperior to and eſſentially different from matter! And, could your hypotheſis be ever ſatisfactorily demonſtrated, the ſo long uſurped dominion of that immaterial *ſomething*, termed *ſoul*, would

would be thrown down, and itſelf be ignominiouſly levelled with the duſt.

There is one thing, Sir, I almoſt forgot to mention: it regards the exquiſite powers, you conceive, the brain may have received from its maker. Your meaning is not clear. You can ſcarcely fancy, when a brain is to be formed, that the almighty hand takes upon it the plaſtic function of uniting element to element, and then preſents the whole with the exalted powers of perception. Were this the caſe, this privileged maſs of matter, muſt never be allowed to change, either by parting with any of its primary conſtituent particles, or by acquiring new ones; as every change would neceſſarily affect its perceptive abilities. The new acquired elements could be no other than the common plebeian particles of other bodies. Still if the brain be alone percipient; that capacity muſt ſpring, either from a ſpecial grant, which cannot be underſtood; or from its component parts in their origin and after-exiſtence, being of a ſingular conſtitution, which is equally incredible, as the brain is nouriſhed from the more ſubtle part of our aliment, and ſeems not to

be of a texture different, in quality at leaſt, from the ſpinal marrow, or the whole nervous ſyſtem, which is known to be an expanded ramification of the brainy ſubſtance; or finally, it muſt be concluded, that the perceptive power is derived from mere organization: but then, why ſhould the agency of an almighty creator be wantonly drawn in to form this brain, when nature, in her own laboratory, without any new acquired ſkill, is alone equal to the curious workmanſhip? It ſeemed proper to mention theſe difficulties, which aroſe in my mind, from the view of your very ſingular aſſertion. I muſt ſuppoſe, however, that you only mean to ſay that, from organization alone the brain acquires whatever perfection, it may have.

Let us now ſee what can be made of a tremulous motion, which you define perception to be. All bodies, as you obſerve, in a greater or leſs degree, are ſuſceptible of ſuch motion, when their conſtituent particles are not in actual contact. Strike them; a vibratory motion commences, and is propagated from part to part. The ſame thing takes place in a ſimilar manner, when a nerve, in the human

man body, is by any cauſe put in motion; the tremor begins at one extremity, and from thence paſſes to the other, terminating in the brain. There, perhaps, the motion may be diffuſed, and ſo communicated to other parts of the medullary ſyſtem.

The queſtion now is; why the latter ſpecies of tremulous motion ſhould be *eſſentially* different from that, which is produced in the common claſs of bodies; that is, why the firſt motion ſhould be barely motion, and why the ſecond, beſides its tremulous affection, ſhould moreover be ſomething ſo ſtrangely wonderful, as is *perception* in your hypotheſis? Where cauſes are ſimilar, the effects ſhould alſo be ſimilar. To render the difficulty more ſtriking, let it be ſuppoſed that a red ray acts upon its appropriated fibre in the eye; a tremulous motion is inſtantly generated, and ſent up the fibre to the brain: the vibration in the brain you call the perception of a red colour. But moſt evidently, beſides the mere mechanical vibration, another effect is here produced, very different from the motion, *i. e.* the perception of red. Or if you inſiſt, that this laſt effect is really identified

to the firſt, and only imagined to be different from the precipitancy or weakneſs of our diſcerning faculties, or rather organs; What, Sir, can you make of the *ſentiment*, which attends this perception of red, by which I know that the colour, I ſee, is red. This ſenſe you will ſcarcely, I fancy, alſo reſolve into the ſame tremulous agitation. And, that you may not fly to any aſſociated affection, whereby to account for it; I will farther ſuppoſe the ray in queſtion to be the firſt object, which ſtrikes on the eye of a new-born infant: it ſhall raiſe the firſt perception, he hath ever experienced. Though the infant, for want of other ideas, will not be able to draw any compariſon, or to know what it is, ſtill he will *feel* he is affected; and this feeling muſt be ſomething widely different from the vibratory motion in the nerve. ---To me it is clear then, that perceptions are ſomething more than mere vibrations. But it will be ſaid, that Dr. Prieſtley cannot poſſibly fancy them to be identified; and therefore that I am idly combating a notion, which had never any real exiſtence. How true this inſinuation may be, you, Sir, are beſt qualified to determine. I muſt proceed

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to ſhew that, in man there are innumerable affections, to the forming of which the brain alone is unequal.

The capacities of feeling pain and pleaſure, of perceiving the preſence of ideas, ſenſual or intellectual, of comparing thoſe ideas, and of judging betwixt them, joined to that conſcious ſentiment, which attends every mental affection, and of acting in a manner termed voluntary, are, beſides many others, general modifications, whoſe exiſtence is not controverted. If they be affections of the brain alone, and not to be found in any other bodies of the material world, it muſt be allowed, that they originate from ſome ſingular organization. Yet the moſt perfect organization is but the moſt perfect arrangement of material elements; and evidently, what gives but a new extrinſic relation of parts to parts, can never give capacities, which did not before exiſt. If ſuch capacities exiſt, as it is granted they do, their exiſtence muſt be founded in ſomething. Modes and capacities are not ſelf-exiſtent; they are not ſubſtances. If they inhere in the brain, they participate of its nature; are compounded and diviſible

as

as it; are of the ſame fluctuating and changeable quality; in ſhort, are the brain itſelf. But the brain is a body; and bodies neither feel, nor reaſon, nor move progreſſively from a voluntary determination.

But could not the Deity have beſtowed ſuch extraordinary powers on a ſyſtem of matter? I anſwer, he could not: Firſt, becauſe the eſſences of things are eternal and independent; they are what they are, and muſt ever be ſo. If *all* matter enjoys not the capacities in queſtion, they are not eſſential to it: If matter be completely matter without them, the ſuperaddition of ſuch capacities will make the matter, which receives them, ſomething more than matter, and conſequently deſtroy its nature; it will no longer be what it was, that is, matter. Therefore the brain, endowed with ſuch capacities by infinite power, loſes its nature of matter or body, and riſes into a ſuperior order of beings.

Secondly, the powers of perception are incompatible with compoſition of parts. Particular *feelings* might perhaps be conceived

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to ariſe in diſtinct nervous points, and ſo be manifold; but where can be placed that *ſomething*, which unites theſe thouſand feelings, and calls them *mine?* The perception of *cold* in one element or fibre, on your ſuppoſition, will be ſo ſeparately diſtinct from the perception of *heat* in another, that in the whole man it can never be ſaid, *I* am ſenſible of feeling heat and cold.--Unnumbered ſenſations, ideas, inclinations and paſſions in their turn ariſe within us. The brain, you ſay, is the ſeat of ſuch affections. Either then they each individually occupy a particular part, or ſome one, ſuperior to the reſt, muſt within itſelf unite and compriſe them all. One or the other muſt be. In the firſt caſe are made to exiſt as many individual *percipient* beings, as there are affections; but no where will be found that *conſcious unity*, which ever accompanies each affection, or that central point, which aſſimilates to itſelf ſuch various modes of being. In the ſecond caſe, it is not the brain, which perceives.

Thirdly, "Judgment (it is your own definition) is the perception of the univerſal concurrence or the perfect coincidence of two ideas,

ideas, or the want of that concurrence and coincidence." Theſe ideas, you ſuppoſe to reſide in, or to be diſtinct vibrations of the brain. The judgment or perception, which views their agreement or diſagreement, and finally pronounces on them, is itſelf diſtinct from the ideas, yet it ſees them within itſelf: for were it not ſo, their concurrence could no more be perceived, than that of the internal ideas of another man a hundred miles diſtant. Judgment then cannot be the attribute of a compounded ſubſtance.

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But if the brain were the ſole ſubſtance, on which ſuch impreſſions are formed, harmony would be eternally excluded from the world, or rather it would never have exiſted; for, on that ſuppoſition, a thouſand diſtinct vibrations in the nervous ſyſtem could no more give it reality, than it could be raiſed by the ſound itſelf, confined to the external bodies, without any ulterior proceſs. Were each particular ſound to fall on the ear, and each part in an edifice on the eye, and there reſt; What, Sir, do you think, would be the effect? Evidently only this, that the moſt regular and finiſhed ſtructure would remain a heap of ſand; and the airs of an *Arne* be as unaffecting as the whiſtling of the wind. Juſt ſo would it alſo be, were your ſyſtem

the real ſyſtem of nature: no center of union would then exiſt, and conſequently no compariſon or juſt perception; therefore no harmony and proportion.

What has juſt been ſaid is equally applicable to *truth* and *falſhood*. Truth, as viewed in the mind, is the perception of things *as they are*: the reverſe of this is falſhood. But this alſo implies a compariſon, or at leaſt, a ſimultaneous perception of different ideas. Different ideas can be neither compared, nor perceived, where no ſimple point of union ſubſiſts; which can never be found in a ſubſtance diviſible and compounded.

Fourthly, To put this tedious matter, as far as may, paſt all poſſibility of doubt, though indeed enough has been ſaid already, I will here copy a demonſtration, which ſome months ago appeared in the literary journal, I have before mentioned. This I can do without any apology to its author, becauſe, if I remember well, it is itſelf extracted from a French metaphyſical work, intitled, *Inſtitutions Leibnitziennes*. "Let the brain be ſuppoſed to conſiſt of any number of elements: on this ſuppoſition, which is certainly admiſſible, 1. Either the whole brain will be conſcious

ſcious of its exiſtence in ſuch manner, as that its component parts be unconſcious of the ſame; which is a palpable abſurdity; ſince the whole brain is only a collection of parts, and can itſelf poſſeſs nothing, but what is derived from them.---Or 2. of theſe elements each will be ſenſible of its own exiſtence, whilſt the whole brain remains inſenſible: but then the brain itſelf, the organic ſyſtem in queſtion, will be void of all conſcious perception ---Or, 3. the internal feeling we are in ſearch of, muſt be the reſult, the ſum total of each individual ſentiment; which is equally abſurd, for each element is alone conſcious of itſelf, it knows not the feelings of its kindred atoms: we ſhall have thus as many diſtinct perceptions, as elements; that is, each element will be ſeverally conſcious or perceptive of its own exiſtence; nothing in the whole maſs will be able to ſay, *I* am compoſed of elements, it is *I* that exiſt in a compounded and organic ſtate; therefore the whole brain will not be conſcious of its exiſtence; yet does not Dr. Prieſtley perceive that he exiſts?---I have never ſeen any attempt made to invalidate the deciſive force of this argument againſt *Materialiſm*.

Laſtly, the power of acting or moving in a manner termed *voluntary*, as granted to man, cannot be underſtood in your ſyſtem. Organization alone can never give a capacity to the component elements of the brain or body, of which, in their unorganized ſtate, they were totally void.

From all that has been offered, I draw this final conſequence, that matter in every ſtate is incapable of poſſeſſing the powers of perception and thought, either naturally, or by divine diſpenſation; and therefore that in man muſt exiſt a ſubſtance ſuperior to, and eſſentially diſtinct from the brain.---Farewel.

March 18.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

REVEREND SIR,

THE impotency of all matter to perform the mental functions, either by native energy, or by a grant from heaven, hath, I truſt, been ſufficiently evinced. But to introduce a quite new claſs of vibrations into a nervous ſyſtem, by long uſe grown rather callous, is, I conceive, no eaſy undertaking: therefore, whether you will be inclined, from the view of my arguments, to deſert your favourite *Materialiſm*, can only be known by the event. However, I have ſome faint hopes of your converſion from an idea, which this inſtant ſtrikes me; which is, that when you publiſhed your *eſſays*, you was not abſolutely clear, that the doctrine, you then hazarded,

zarded, was certainly true. And I have formed this opinion of your candour, that ſhould it be made appear, you have inadvertently adopted an error, you will warmly ſeize the firſt opportunity, frankly to acknowledge it. So much, at leaſt, you told the Scots Doctors, *you and the public* had a right to expect from them; and why ſhould not the *public and I* be entitled to require the ſame acknowledgement from Dr. Prieſtley? His aſſertion, or *inſinuation*, (take which name it will) I engage, will be eſteemed as pernicious in its conſequences, as the very worſt of thoſe from the northern ſchools.

From an impartial review of the ſubject, as ſtated in my letters, I flatter myſelf, you will be no longer diſpoſed to maintain that, "our having recourſe to an *immaterial principle* to account for perception and thought, is only ſaying, in other words, that we do not know in what they conſiſt." Nor will you ſay, "that we have no more conception how the principle of thought can have any more relation to immateriality, than to materiality."—We know not indeed, and probably never ſhall, either what perception and thought in them-

themſelves ſtrictly are; or how they are formed: but, as you have plainly ſeen, it is not from this ignorance, that we have recourſe to an immaterial principle. It is likewiſe clear, that *thought* hath a greater relation to immateriality, than to materiality; becauſe, in the material ſyſtem, there can poſſibly be no ſuch thing as thought: it muſt then ariſe in, and be related to an immaterial principle. There is no medium.

My opinion therefore is, with the world in general, that man does really conſiſt of two parts, as eſſentially different from one another, as *matter* and *ſpirit*. Theſe two are joined together in the ſtricteſt bonds of union. This union is the ſource of the moſt fertile and moſt wonderful harmony in nature. A ſubſtance, ſimple and *highly* active, ſenſitive, perceptive, cogitative and rational, is united to a being, compounded and *inferiorly active*, inſenſitive, imperceptive, uncogitative and irrational. From this ſurpriſing union ariſes a reciprocal commerce between the two ſubſtances, a ſort of action and re-action, which conſtitutes the life of organized-animated beings. The nerves, ſo many ramifications

from

from the brain and ſpinal marrow, differently agitated by their various objects, communicate their vibrations to the brain: theſe impulſes are anſwered by ſenſations and ideas in the ſoul, totally diſtinct from the cauſe, which appears to produce them.---Such is my general notion of man, as viewed in our preſent metaphyſical medium.

Though it be no real objection to a well-eſtabliſhed ſyſtem, that difficulties may be raiſed againſt it, not eaſily anſwerable, or even not anſwerable at all; ſtill to the minds of many, ſo long as ſuch difficulties remain in force, the very doctrine they combat, appears problematical, or at leaſt carries not with it that power of conviction, it may really merit. Yet, at the ſame time, where is the human ſyſtem to be found, ſo clearly demonſtrated, and fixed on intuitive principles, that againſt it have not been ſtarted many ſubtle and powerful objections? However, for my own ſatisfaction, and for the ſatisfaction of thoſe few, who, beſides your Reverence and myſelf, may be inclined to read theſe heavy metaphyſical pages, I will here ſubjoin ſuch replies, as ſeem to me beſt ſuited

to

to remove the difficulties, which by you and others have been ſo triumphantly urged againſt the doctrine of *immaterialiſm*.

You tell us, in the firſt place, "that *matter* and *ſpirit* are *always* deſcribed, as having not one common property, by means of which they can affect, or act upon each other." —This may be true in the opinion of thoſe philoſophers, who conſider all matter, as paſſive and inert, void of every ſpecies of force, action, or energy. But probably ſuch negative attributes can ſcarcely conſtitute the nature of any being. In every ſentiment indeed the properties of theſe two ſubſtances muſt in part, at leaſt, *eſſentially* differ, becauſe their natures are ever ſaid to be diſſimilar: Yet it does not hence follow, that they may not be endowed with powers, whereby mutually to affect and act upon each other. A being of a ſuperior order may act on an inferior one; placed higher on the ſcale it hath acquired nobler properties; but is not therefore deprived of ſuch inferior qualities, as are not unalliable with the more exalted ſpecies: particularly this muſt be the caſe, where the ſuperior being conſtitutes a part of the ſame

ideas, or the want of that concurrence and coincidence." Theſe ideas, you ſuppoſe to reſide in, or to be diſtinct vibrations of the brain. The judgment or perception, which views their agreement or diſagreement, and finally pronounces on them, is itſelf diſtinct from the ideas, yet it ſees them within itſelf: for were it not ſo, their concurrence could no more be perceived, than that of the internal ideas of another man a hundred miles diſtant. Judgment then cannot be the attribute of a compounded ſubſtance.

Harmony in muſic is ſaid to ariſe from a number of modulated ſounds; *proportion* alſo or ſymmetry in architecture from the appropriate arrangement of materials. But each ſound taken ſeparately is void of harmony, as each ſtone in a building is diveſted of all exactneſs and proportion. In the external objects *themſelves* then what have we, but detached and inſulated ſounds, detached and inſulated ſtones, only riſing in a definite order of ſucceſſion and co-exiſtence? If this be ſo, what gives exiſtence to the charms of harmony and proportion? I anſwer, that being alone, which gifted with percipient and comparing

paring powers, can take in ſuch various tones and various parts; can compare them together, and thus perceive, accord and proportion. This exalted power, through the wide ſtretch of nature, is alone capable of giving exiſtence to ſuch unſubſtantial forms. Harmony and ſymmetry are mere effects of compariſon; all their reality is derived from man.

But if the brain were the ſole ſubſtance, on which ſuch impreſſions are formed, harmony would be eternally excluded from the world, or rather it would never have exiſted; for, on that ſuppoſition, a thouſand diſtinct vibrations in the nervous ſyſtem could no more give it reality, than it could be raiſed by the ſound itſelf, confined to the external bodies, without any ulterior proceſs. Were each particular ſound to fall on the ear, and each part in an edifice on the eye, and there reſt; What, Sir, do you think, would be the effect? Evidently only this, that the moſt regular and finiſhed ſtructure would remain a heap of ſand; and the airs of an *Arne* be as unaffecting as the whiſtling of the wind. Juſt ſo would it alſo be, were your ſyſtem

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alted powers of the ſoul, that their firſt diſplay, and after-exertion, ſhould have been made dependent of the bodily organs; that they ſhould mutually correſpond in the exacteſt proportion of growth and maturity; and that finally they ſhould fade and die off in the ſame ratio, as man deſcends towards the grave. All this only ſerves to evince their fixed deſtination; it points out a ſyſtem of the moſt perfect harmony, wherein part muſt tally with part, and the whole accord, or the inevitable conſequence is, diſcord, diſorder, and diſſolution.

When man is conſidered in this general aſpect, all thoſe difficulties inſtantly vaniſh, which are drawn from the ſtate of infancy, from ſickneſs, diſorders, &c. It is clear that a blow on the head, or any accident, by which the finer organs of ſenſe and reaſoning are injured, muſt cauſe a derangement, and ſometimes a total ceſſation of every mental operation. A broken or un-tuned inſtrument will never give you the pleaſing ſounds of harmony in muſic.

It is equally unphiloſophical to argue againſt the union of ſoul and body from the examples of the recovery of perſons drowned, ſtrangled, or from other cauſes apparently dead. For evidently real life depends upon a certain ſtate of the nervous ſyſtem: as long as this remains ſound and entire, ſo long the animal may live, provided a proper degree of motion be continued in the interior parts, or ſoon after it hath ceaſed, be again renewed by the application of ſtimuli, &c. Probably therefore the ſoul never quits its bodily habitation, till this becomes utterly unfit to perform vital functions; that is, not before the parts beg into decay and putrefy.

It appears then, that the main objections raiſed againſt the union ſyſtem, amount to no more, than what are urged againſt every human opinion, hitherto advanced. But, as I have before obſerved, ſhould difficulties be ſtarted really unanſwerable, ſtill they would not militate againſt the doctrine itſelf, which ſeems grounded on a ſeries of arguments, deeply fraught with geometrical evidence. Were any thing ſtill wanting; it would greatly contribute to enforce conviction, to place

in a point of contraſt the two ſyſtems, each freely charged with its ſeveral difficulties. I well know, on which would fall the heavieſt burthen, were the even hand of candour to perform the office. But though *Materialiſm* might, perhaps, for a time, ſupport the huge load, powerfully held up by your hand; it muſt however ſoon ſink, and be overwhelmed for ever, when abſurdities mountain high are heaved upon it. That ſuch abſurdities are to be found, I truſt, has fully appeared. Take care, Sir, you are not hurt by the fall of ſo ruinous and monſtrous a fabric.---On the other hand, I dare defy the moſt virulent and ſubtle adverſary to produce one ſingle abſurdity, through the whole ſyſtem of *immaterialiſm*, which, with his hand on his breaſt, the Rev. Dr. Prieſtley will declare to be ſuch.

If man, as hath been ſhewn, is not of any uniform material compoſition, but a being formed by the junction of two ſubſtances, ſo widely different as body and ſoul, and this ſoul be one and uncompounded, the direct conſequence is, that the *ſoul of man is naturally indeſtructible and immortal. Deſtruction*

can

can only be effected by a decompoſition of parts, and where no ſuch parts exiſt, eternal duration muſt neceſſarily follow. Can it then be ſaid with the leaſt ſemblance of reaſon, "that the *whole man* becomes extinct at death, and that we have no hopes of ſurviving the grave, but what are derived from the ſcheme of revelation?" The human body indeed will be diſſolved in death; it is the fate of compoſitions to fall in pieces, when the tie is broken, by which the parts mutually adhered. But the ſoul muſt ſurvive the diſſolution of its partner; it can never know corruption: no agent, however powerful, excepting him alone, who made it, can deſtroy a ſimple uncompounded ſubſtance; therefore, independently of *all revelation*, man by his philoſophy is aſſured, that his ſoul muſt remain for ever

Unhurt, amidſt the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the cruſh of worlds. *Addiſon.*

Yet it may be ſaid, of what ſingular benefit will future exiſtence be to man, if it be his ſoul alone that ſurvives the grave? The

ſoul, you will ſay, according to my doctrine, independently of its bodily organs, is not capable of one affection; exiled therefore from the body, it can neither be ſenſible of pain or pleaſure; it will neither perceive nor think. In this ſolitary ſtate can be no memory, conſequently no perſonal identity. Enviable condition indeed, thus to be wrapped up in a torpid ſtate of ſelf-annihilation and inſenſibility!

I freely grant, that ſuch a mode of exiſtence would not be very deſirable. Though were that really to be the caſe, I have ſtill one pleaſing reflection, which is, that I have ſhewn againſt you, that reaſon can itſelf point out to man an *hereafter*, beyond the grave. To demonſtrate this ſingle point hath been hitherto my leading object. But muſt philoſophy then here abruptly deſiſt from enquiry? Can it barely enſure exiſtence? and can it not throw over it ſome few charms to brighten up the dreary proſpect, whereby the child of nature may be allured to fancy it a ſtate worth contending for? With regard to any future exiſtence of our bodies, I am clearly ſenſible, that reaſon alone can give us no ſecurity, if they

they be conſidered in the direct view of material aggregates. In this light they muſt ſhare the common fate of other bodies. Their conſtituent elements muſt indeed ever exiſt, becauſe they are ſimple, as are ſouls and ſpirits; but ſuch elements are neither matter, nor body, in the uſual acceptation. I am likewiſe ſenſible, that the ſoul, detached from its material vehicle, is *naturally* unſuſceptible of every affection. Still I am not diſcouraged, becauſe it remains in the power of philoſophy to demonſtrate, that *man*, as a *moral agent*, muſt ſurvive the grave: but man, as ſuch, whatever region he inhabits, is eſſentially compoſed of ſoul and body; therefore will the *whole man* exiſt hereafter. That grand point then remains to be proved; indeed it is a neceſſary appendage to the doctrine, I have been labouring to eſtabliſh. The whole demonſtration ſhall be compriſed in as few words as poſſible. It would be futile to dwell long on a ſubject, that has been ſo fully diſcuſſed by every writer on the immortality of man.

That God is a being infinitely *good* and *juſt*, cannot be controverted by the man, who denies

nies not his exiſtence. Such a being will not contemn the works of his own hands; he muſt contemplate with pleaſure the atom and the planet, the inſect and the elephant, whilſt in their reſpective ſpheres, each conforms to the guidance of his pre-eſtabliſhed laws. But man muſt be his ſpecial care, be-in his nature and attributes he approaches nearer to infinitude; and becauſe the powers, which have been given him, are the real, though faint, reſemblances of thoſe high attributes, goodneſs and juſtice, which ſtand foremoſt in the liſt of divine perfections. Virtue muſt be the object moſt eminently pleaſing to him; becauſe virtue conſiſts in the obſervance of order, which is itſelf juſtice; therefore muſt vice, the child of diſorder, be diſpleaſing and hateful.

But what is analogous to the divine perfections, and approved by the Deity, cannot but challenge a reward proportioned to it: order would otherwiſe loſe its very name and nature. *Happineſs* is the only reward, analogous to the nature of man; therefore is happineſs the *neceſſary* attendant on virtue, in a ſyſtem, where goodneſs and juſtice preſide.

Vice

Vice muſt alſo, from the ſame eſſential connection, be followed by miſery and unhappineſs. Could the Deity be indifferent to virtue and vice, he would not be God; becauſe he would not be good and juſt: and were thoſe oppoſites to meet with a ſimilar treatment from his hands, the eſſences of things would be changed; vice and virtue would be identified. Still is not vice in this life always followed by miſery; nor is virtue always proſperous. Look around you, Sir, and tell me if it be not ſo. But if all ends here; if the cruel tyrant, who hath deluged his country in blood, and never in his fury ſpared nor innocence, nor virtue, yet ſtill lives proſperous and pampered, and expires on a throne; if ſuch a one ſhare an equal fate with the virtuous man, who hath lived in penury and died in torments, becauſe his virtues were odious to the monſter, juſt deſcribed; if, I ſay, their fate be equal, to be mingled for ever with the duſt;---then are juſtice and goodneſs words without meaning; vice and virtue are airy bubbles; the world is left to the dominion of chance, or fate, or confuſion; it is not the product of an all-wiſe creator: therefore is God an infinite, eternal,

eternal, unmeaning phantom; or rather he does not exiſt.

The conſcious pleaſure, which attends the performance of good actions, is by no means an adequate reward to virtue; beſides, it is from the future proſpect that virtue draws more than half her charms. Aſk the patient ſufferer, what it is that blunts the thorn of affliction, and gives ſuch repoſe to his mind? ---Nor is the remorſe, conſequent on vice, a ſufficient puniſhment, if it be any, to the hardened in iniquity.

There muſt then be another world, wherein will be compenſated the preſent unequal diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments; therefore muſt *man* exiſt hereafter. But as it is man, who will be miſerable or happy, he muſt be capable of feeling pain or pleaſure; which cannot *naturally* be, unleſs his ſoul remain united to an organized body. It muſt alſo be the ſame, or a body ſimilar to that he had upon earth; becauſe the rewards or puniſhments he then meets with, will be juſtly proportioned to the good or bad works done in the days of fleſh; of this equitable treatment

juſtice

juſtice requires he ſhould be ſenſible; which cannot be, unleſs he recollect his own deeds; but recollection pre-ſuppoſes the ſame or a ſimilar arrangement of the nervous ſyſtem. Thus alſo will be preſerved his perſonal identity: he will connect the paſt with the preſent, and thereby diſcover that he who was, and is, is ſtill the ſame.

With reſpect to identity of perſon, concerning which ſo much has been ſaid, in my opinion, it depends on the *ſame* ſoul being always adjoined to a body ſimilarly organized. As long as a man knows himſelf to be the ſame, from a recollected connection betwixt the paſt and the preſent, ſo long he is the ſame perſon, tho' from ſome external change of features he might not be known by others. But if, by any accident or ſickneſs, memory ſhould be ſo far loſt, as that no recollection of the paſt ſhould remain, though he could not then be ſenſible of his own identity, yet by a ſuperior being, who might have beheld the ſame ſoul uninterruptedly united to the ſame body, he would ſtill be denominated the ſame man.

Finally, Man's exiſtence cannot be termed merely relative or temporary; for it hath been ſhewn that he will exiſt for ever, or rather, that as a moral agent he muſt again riſe from the duſt, that virtue and vice may receive their *juſt proportion* of reward and puniſhment. Farther than that term reaſon cannot advance. But why an all-good being ſhould then permit him to drop into nothing, can never be ſaid. The ſoul however muſt ſubſiſt for ever, as muſt the elements of matter, unleſs they be annihilated by infinite power.——Farewell.

March 19.

LETTER

LETTER V.

REVEREND SIR,

YOU will undoubtedly think it very impertinent in me, or at leaſt very idle, to preſent *you* with a general view of Dr. Hartley's theory; you, who have already communicated one to the public, and who, moreover, by a long intercourſe with the ſyſtem, have by this time rendered it ſo familiar, that it is become aſſociated with every idea of your *mind*---I beg pardon for uſing ſo vulgar a term—and with every circumſtance of your life. You are now juſt as much neceſſitated to adopt Hartley's ſyſtem, you know, as is a Welchman's harp to ſound

Sir *Watkin's Delight*, when his ſmutty fingers run over the ſtrings in a certain order. It is indeed vain to war againſt ſtubborn neceſſity; ſtill I am determined again to analyze Dr. Hartley. One reaſon is; becauſe *your* view of his theory does not altogether pleaſe me, and another is, that I think it poſſible to bring the ſubſtance of that doctrine within the compaſs of a few pages, in ſuch manner, that it may with a little attention be eaſily underſtood; and therefore eaſily ſaid, whether it really merits thoſe high encomiums, you have ſo laviſhly heaped upon it.

What, in my opinion, renders the Doctor's work more obſcure, is, that you in your introductory eſſays, deſigned for its illuſtration, and the learned author himſelf, frequently expreſs yourſelves in the common philoſophical language, when the very nature of your ideas required, you ſhould have cautiouſly avoided it. In a ſyſtem, for inſtance, where every thing is mechaniſm and fatality, what have you to do with *mental powers* and *operations*, and *endeavours*, and *choice*, &c. unleſs in the way of refutation? Whereas ſuch words as often occur in your eſſays,

eſſays, and in Dr. Hartley, as in any other philoſophical performance, of which the principles are juſt the reverſe of yours. Such modes of expreſſion greatly confuſe the ſubject, and inevitably lead the reader, either into miſtakes, or incline him to ſuſpect, the the author's own mind was not quite clear, and ſettled to the ſyſtem.---I will now attempt, in my turn, to exhibit this curious theory in its pure native habiliments, diveſted of all ornament and every idea, that does not neceſſarily adhere to it.

Man, according to Dr. Hartley, conſiſts of two parts, *body* and *mind*. The firſt is ſubjected to our ſenſes and enquiries: the latter is that ſubſtance or principle, to which we refer ſenſations, ideas, pleaſures, pains, and voluntary motions; alſo to the ſame principle belong the properties of memory, imagination, underſtanding, and reaſon; in ſhort, it is the ſeat of all affections, termed mental. The body may be conſidered in the light of a muſical inſtrument, but whoſe cords are innumerable: theſe all originate from the medullary ſubſtance of the brain and ſpinal marrow, and terminate in the ſenſes. They are the

the *immediate* inſtruments of all the mental modifications. On the nature of their component elements depends the conſtitution of the nerves. At all events, the cauſes, by which they are affected, are diſſimilar; conſequently the effects muſt correſpond. A nerve, reſembling a ſtretched cord, will vibrate, when ſtruck, either at its extreme point, or at any other part. The generated tremor will be continued to the brain, nor does this ſpecies of motion inſtantly ceaſe, but dies away gradually. The nerves communicate one with another; not only thoſe of the ſame ſenſe, but alſo of different ſenſes; either directly or by tranſverſe channels, or by ſomething ſimilar, or in fine by the brain, in which they all concenter. A nerve once ſtrongly affected, ſeems to acquire a laſting tendency to the ſame line of direction.

Such are the preliminary ideas, on which is founded the doctrine of *vibrations*, the grand phyſical cauſe of all the phenomena of the human mind. For whatever changes take place in the nervous ſyſtem, to theſe, according to the pre-eſtabliſhed laws of union, uniform effects are ſuppoſed to correſpond in the

the mind. When a ſingle nerve, for inſtance, vibrates; the mind receives a ſingle modification: when two, or more; the mental effects exactly anſwer. When the vibrations are in one ſenſe, the ſoul experiences effects appropriated to that ſenſe. If the motion firſt generated in a particular ſenſe, communicate itſelf to the fibres of ſome other; the mind will be analogouſly affected. If the nervous agitations be regular, the mental proceſs will be regular: if the former, from various external or internal cauſes, be irregular and diſcordant, alſo will be ſo the mind's effects. If the nerves be ſtrongly or gently moved, the ſoul will be correſpondently agitated, and ſo on, through the almoſt infinite ſeries of mental evolutions: therefore all the phænomena of *memory*, *imagination*, *volition*, *reaſoning*, and every other mental affection, are only ſo many different mechanical effects, anſwering to the different vibrations generated in the nervous ſyſtem. From hence ariſes the ſecond great member of the Doctor's theory, the doctrine of the *aſſociation of ideas*.

I ſhould have obſerved, relative to the brain and its nerves, that beſides thoſe which are

are appropriated to the action of external bodies, ſuch as the common objects of the different ſenſes, there are, moreover, innumerable other bundles of fibres, ſtationed in the ears and eyes, calculated to receive impreſſions from the words of different languages, as theſe may act on either ſenſe, whether by ſound in pronunciation, or by light, when repreſented in writing. Theſe may be called *intellectual* nerves, becauſe they give riſe to ſuch ideas, as have acquired that appellation. In their mode of generation and mechanical nature, ſuch ideas are no ways diſtinguiſhed from the former ones of ſenſe. But as in the ordinary courſe of things, different effects, though produced by one common cauſe, have received different appellations; ſo alſo hath it happened in the human mind. Here *vibrations* are the univerſal operative cauſes. The effects are denominated ſenſations; which are thoſe internal feelings of the mind, ariſing from the impreſſions made by external objects on the ſeveral parts of our bodies:—or ideas; which are all our other internal feelings.—The ideas, which reſemble ſenſations, are called *ideas of ſenſation*, or ſenſitive: all the reſt are called *intellectual* ideas, becauſe they bear

bear no reſemblance to the general claſs of ſenſations, or their ideas.

So much for theſe mental effects, which from their reſpective natures, and mutual aſſociations, are ſuppoſed to conſtitute the whole furniture of our minds. From this variety in effects, the mind is moreover conſidered as endowed with different properties, ſuch as *memory*, *imagination*, *underſtanding*, and *will*; as a body is ſaid to be extended, impenetrable, elaſtic, &c. from the different effects, that are produced in it. The mental properties will be explained, as their reſpective modifications fall under conſideration, in the courſe of my analyſis. I ſhall not ſcrupulouſly follow Dr. Hartley's order, becauſe it is not always duly progreſſive.

According to the general laws, by which ſenſations and ideas anſwer to different vibrations, it is eaſily underſtood, that the various affections, belonging to the five ſenſes, muſt neceſſarily ariſe in the mind, when their proper objects act upon them. The extenſive ſenſual ſyſtem having acquired by repeated vibrations a general tendency to motion,

will readily, upon the ſlighteſt irritation, generate the ſenſitive ideas; which will riſe, ſometimes in an uniform order, anſwerable to their firſt appearance; and ſometimes in a hundred aſſociated forms. The firſt belong to *memory*; the ſecond to the *imagination* or *fancy*. Thus are gradually formed all the groups of complex ideas, which, after a long and various courſe of aſſociation, it will not be eaſy to analize into their ſeveral component parts. They coaleſce together in the ſame manner, as the ſeven rays combine to form the colour *white*. But as in this colour each conſtituent ray is really in itſelf one and ſimple, though not diſtinguiſhable by the niceſt eye; ſo alſo in mental aggregates, the component ideas are really diſtinct and individual, though often not diſcoverable by the moſt analytical proceſs. The reaſon, why we are inclined to conſider the complex idea as *one*, is owing to the crouded manner, in which ſuch ideas generally preſent themſelves: had we, in their primary formation, given due attention to them, we ſhould then have ſeen how they coaleſced together, and how diſtinct they really were, one from the other.---A being, that ſhould never riſe above the

the level of ſenſations and ſenſitive ideas, would be of a very contracted nature: all his knowledge would be confined to the direct objects of ſenſe, and his ſole attributes would be ſenſibility, memory and imagination. Such are probably the generality of the brute creation.

Voluntary motion, as defined by Dr. Hartley, is that, which follows *directly* from any ſtate of the mind, *i. e.* ideas. But for this effect it is previouſly requiſite, that the part to be moved ſhould have contracted a facility of moving in a certain direction. The hand of a child firſt bends from ſome ſtimulus applied to the palm: a play-thing is next put into the hand, and it contracts: the ſame play-thing, whilſt in the hand, acts alſo on the eyes of the child: the nerves of the eyes and the hand communicate, at leaſt in the brain, and the nerves of the hands are likewiſe connected with the muſcles of that member. The child a ſecond time ſees his play-thing, but does not touch it; ſtill the hand performs the action of graſping. This is effected by means of the aſſociation, that hath been formed, betwixt the nerves of the eye

and the hand; in conſequence whereof the latter are agitated, and from their union with the muſcles of the hand, theſe are alſo contracted, and the child graſps.---The firſt motion of the hand, from the ſtimulus, was *automatic*, to expreſs myſelf Hartleyan like; but the ſecond, ſays the Doctor very gravely, is perfectly *voluntary*; becauſe it proceeds from a ſtate of the mind, *i. e.* from the ſenſation or idea of the play-thing. Other ſimilar aſſociations from the view of the nurſe, and other objects, may eaſily take place, with which will be connected the voluntary action of graſping. In like manner will commence, and be perpetuated all other movements, ſuch as walking, reaching, handling, &c.

From hence it is inferred, that muſcular motion is performed in the ſame general manner, as ſenſations and the perception of ideas, *i. e.* by vibrations.---As this motion follows more or leſs directly from ideas, it is eſteemed more or leſs voluntary. But when voluntary in the higheſt degree, it is not leſs a mechanical effect, as neceſſarily proceeding from its impelling cauſe, a particular vibration in the motatory nerves attached to certain

tain muſcles, as does the motion of a watch from the action of its ſpring. The ſtate of mind, immediately previous to the voluntary motion, is by the Doctor very obligingly honoured with the appellation of *will*.---Every being therefore ſuſceptible of ſenſations, is capable of voluntary motions; which are all deducible from the principle of aſſociation, as juſt explained. The ſame impulſive cauſes bring the child and every inferior animal to walk, &c.

If then the doctrine of *aſſociation of ideas* be founded on, and deducible from that of *vibrations*; all ſenſations, ſenſitive ideas, and motions, whether voluntary, or automatic, will be uniformly conducted according to the ſtate of the ſmall particles of the nerves and the brain. "So admirable is this hypotheſis, (emphatically exclaims a great philoſopher) which wears the face of that *ſimplicity in cauſes*, and *variety in effects*, which we diſcover in every other part of nature!"

But our ſyſtem muſt not ſtop here: ſenſations, and ſenſitive ideas with the properties of memory, imagination, and voluntary motion

tion do not conſtitute man; he is ſomething more than all this: let us then ſee how his other capacities may be developed by virtue of the ſame vibratory principles.

Signs, either verbal or ſymbolical, ſeem abſolutely neceſſary to the exiſtence of *intellectual* ideas; by Mr. Locke called ideas of *reflection*. For how could ſuch ideas have been at firſt generated, or afterwards re-produced in the mind, had there not been ſomething ſenſible and external to act upon, and modify the various fibres, neceſſary to impreſs the mind? Such intellectual ideas are thoſe of ſubſtances, termed ſpiritual, and all ideas of incorporeal things, ſuch as time, place, ſubſtance, thought, ſcience, art, &c. To the exiſtence of ſuch ideas, language, it ſeems, was requiſite; which compoſed of different words or ſigns, ſhould by ſuch ſigns act upon the organs of the ſight and hearing, and correſpondently raiſe in the mind ideas appropriated to them. By language, and the train of knowledge conſequent from it, man enters into a new creation, and is eminently raiſed above the brute world, whoſe whole ſtock of ſcience is purely of a ſenſitive nature.

Intellectual

Intellectual ideas, ſays Dr. Hartley, are produced in the ſame manner, as the common ideas of ſenſe, that is, by vibrations. To illuſtrate this point, we muſt go back to the mind of ſome child, who hath experienced many ſenſitive ideas, but on whoſe ear, as yet, no word hath ever ſounded. To him I pronounce the word *dog*, and at the ſame inſtant point to the animal, he is playing with. A ſet of auditory fibres are agitated by the ſound, and in his mind is generated a ſenſation proper to that ſound. The experiment is repeated ſix or ſeven times ſucceſſively whilſt the child's eye is fixed on the dog. Gradually the ocular fibres, which by their vibrations, raiſe the ſenſation of the dog, begin to move in uniſon with the auditory ones, D, O, G. The next day, when I perceive the child's back turned to his play-fellow, I again ſmartly pronounce the ſame word: he inſtantly turns to him. An aſſociation is thus formed, and the idea of his dog will continue to be raiſed, as often as he hears the ſound. Alſo ſeeing other animals of the ſame kind, they will be aſſociated with the ſame word. A hundred ſimilar aſſociations will by degrees join themſelves to the leading

ſenſitive

ſenſitive idea; that is, every circumſtance, and every perſon, that hath been connected with that idea, will by aſſociation have a power of recalling it. And not only will the idea of the dog be excited by theſe circumſtances, but alſo that leading idea itſelf becomes introductory to the ideas of the adjoined circumſtances, being made mutual cauſes to one another. But I am barely deſcribing effects, the immediate phyſical cauſes of which are the nervous vibrations. The fibres, which have vibrated in the whole proceſs regarding the dog, have contracted a power of moving each other in a definite order, by which each produces its proper effect. As the ſound of the word dog hath been aſſociated with the ſenſitive idea of that animal, in the ſame manner will other words proceed to their effects; and the child's book of knowledge will daily and hourly encreaſe.

But to the pronunciation of every word muſt at the ſame time be joined the ſight of the object, it is meant to ſignify; for, as Dr. Hartley obſerves, "It is manifeſt, that words ſeen or heard can raiſe no ideas in the mind, or vibrations in the brain, diſtinct from their viſible

viſible and audible impreſſions, except as they get new powers from aſſociation." Therefore the word itſelf is only to be conſidered as introductory to the ſenſitive ideas; for where no ſenſitive idea riſes, which is the caſe when we hear the words of an unknown language, nothing is perceived but ſound. The reaſon is evident; no aſſociation has been formed betwixt that ſound and any ſenſitive ideas.---What hath been ſaid of words, relative to the auditory nerves, is, in the ſame ſenſe, applicable to them, as marked down in writing, and thus made objects of another ſenſe. New aſſociations are then formed in a manner ſimilar to the former.

As ſingle words get a power of raiſing ſimple and complex ideas, ſo likewiſe ſentences, collections of words, are united with collections of complex, and decomplex ideas; and this by the magic of aſſociation. As then it is by aſſociation alone, *i. e.* by calling up ſenſitive ideas, that words mean any thing; it is clear, that all our knowledge muſt neceſſarily be tied down to ſuch ideas, and that, in fact, we never riſe above the objects of ſenſe. The various combinations of ſenſitive

ideas, are every thing the human mind can poſſibly poſſeſs. What then, it will with reaſon be aſked, are theſe boaſted *intellectual* ideas. I anſwer, or rather Dr. Hartley anſwers; nothing more than very complex collections of ſenſitive ideas, whoſe ſimple and component real elements, for want of a due attention to their firſt formation, we are not now able to diſtinguiſh.

We fancy, when a metaphyſical word, for example, is pronounced or ſeen, that the riſing idea, which inſtantly ſhews itſelf, is of a ſuperior intellectual nature; whilſt in fact it is barely a complex perception, made up of different ſenſitive parts, which by uſe have been cloſely aſſociated with the metaphyſical term. Theſe aſſociations were formed either ſo early in life, or in a manner ſo void of attention, that it is no longer poſſible to diſcover how they were effected.

It is not indeed eaſy to conceive the truth of this hypotheſis; but if, as the doctor maintains, ideas of every denomination are merely vibratory effects; as ſuch moſt evidently they can mean nothing, only as the repreſen-

ſentatives of external objects. Words act upon the ſenſes, and raiſe in the mind ſenſations or perceptions, exactly reſponſive to the ſounds or characters; but ſhould the buſineſs reſt there, nothing would be underſtood; conſequently an ulterior effect is requiſite, which is the generation of an aſſociated ſenſitive idea.---It will be farther urged: of what great benefit then is language, if it only ſerve to raiſe ideas, that might by other means be preſented to the mind? The anſwer is; that though ſuch ſenſitive ideas exiſt independently of language, ſtill as it is by words, that new aſſociations are cemented to the firſt acquired ſtock of ſenſitive ideas, its real uſe becomes very great and extenſive. How barren of knowledge, from the ſole want of language, are the minds of animals, and of perſons born without the ſenſe of ſight and hearing.---But ſome words, ſuch as *judgment*, *underſtanding*, *thought*, &c. have a power of generating ideas in the mind; yet evidently are ſo disjointed from every object of ſenſe, that it is impoſſible they ſhould only be intelligible by raiſing ſenſitive ideas. This, ſays Dr. Hartley, among many others, is but an inſtance of our ignorance, and no

proof of deficiency in the theory itſelf. Could we once ſee, he would tell us, the real conſtituent elements of thoſe ſpiritualized ideas, it would then appear of what ſtuff they are compoſed. Let not then the geometrician, or metaphyſician, or divine, vainly imagine that in their ſpeculations, they riſe above the level of vulgar thoughts: their ſublimeſt conceptions are no more than ſo many bundles of ideas drawn from common objects, but ſo twined and twiſted together, that it is become impracticable to diſcern their native features.

Hence it follows that, as every idea is the immediate effect of vibratory motions, the ſoul, in all her ſuppoſed operations, muſt be ever paſſive and inert. She may be compared to a mirror, on whoſe face are deſcribed a thouſand different objects, juſt as they paſs before it. This wonderful automatiſm---but it is now time to take a curſory ſurvey of the remaining mental properties.

It is ridiculous indeed to talk of *properties*, when confeſſedly that of perception is the only real one: yet Dr. Hartley has preſerved

ſerved the old appellations, and he diſcourſes about them with as ſerious an air, as if he were really perſuaded of their exiſtence. So inveterate is the force of long acquired prejudices; for I can aſcribe it to nothing elſe.---We have ſeen ſenſations, ſenſitive ideas, memory, imagination, voluntary motion, and the intellectual forms diſplaying themſelves; but the *underſtanding* in its various branches now *comes* forth, and thoſe wild modifications of ſenſations, commonly called *paſſions*.

Underſtanding, ſays the Doctor, is that faculty, by which we contemplate mere ſenſations and ideas, purſue truth, and aſſent to, or diſſent from propoſitions." He means to ſay, would he appear conſiſtent, that underſtanding is barely the perception of ſenſations or ſenſitive ideas; theſe, as they are more in number or excited by ſtronger vibrations, draw the ſoul to one ſide, rather than another; which is *aſſenting* to one, and *diſſenting* from another propoſition. As the ſcales of a ballance are drawn down by the greater weight; the ſinking ſcale aſſents, whilſt the riſing one diſſents. This is ſpeaking intelligibly and conſiſtently; "for aſſent and diſſent,

ſent, ſays he elſe-where, are only thoſe very complex feelings, which adhere by aſſociation to ſuch cluſters of ideas, as are called propoſitions in general, and affirmations and negations in particular."---In ſhort all the different modifications of the property of reaſon or underſtanding, are only ſo many different ſtates of mind, ſpringing from various vibrations; to which, as the ſenſations and ſenſible ideas, in their innumerable complex aſſociations, drawn in the ſame or different directions, have been given different names. I appeal to you, Sir, for the truth of this delineation, which frees me from the diſagreeable toil of purſuing this ſubject any further, though Dr. Hartley with a deſign, I fear, of puzzling his readers, *writes and writes ſo much about it*, as Churchill ſays of the author of *the Divine Legation*.

The *paſſions* again are trains of ſenſitive ideas, ſuddenly and forcibly called up within us. They are excited by various objects, and by incidents of life, that have joined themſelves to our ideas; add alſo words, or ſymbols, or infine every other aſſociated circumſtance, how minute or trivial ſoever. *Ineſt*

ſua

ſua gratia parvis. A child, let us ſuppoſe by way of illuſtration, is burnt by the fire, in a certain room, in the preſence of his nurſe. There are ſo many circumſtances annexed to the ſenſations of burning. The ſtrong emotion or paſſion of *fear* is generated.---I aſk you, Sir, *en paſſant*, by what mode of aſſociation this before unfelt paſſion is excited?--- For a long time after the accident, the child will always be afraid, when he ſees a fire, or enters the ſame room. Still theſe circumſtances have not, as was before obſerved of words and other ſigns, any power to effect, independently of aſſociation. The ſame theory is applicable to the other paſſions.---As then the paſſions are collections of ſenſitive ideas, they muſt be ſtates of conſiderable pleaſure or pain: and as ſenſitive ideas are introduced by the five ſenſes, theſe likewiſe will be inlets to the paſſions, according as the aſſociated circumſtances chance to operate. If to the ſame circumſtance has been annexed a variety of pleaſing emotions; theſe, as the occaſion offers, will be all excited by it, in one general complex emotion or paſſion. Experience often evinces the truth of this obſervation. Infine ſenſitive ideas and paſſions,

as

as they are in fact, the ſame thing, originate all from the ſame cauſe, viz. nervous vibrations; and from the ſame ſource alſo proceed the ſix agreed claſſes of intellectual pleaſures and pains, to wit, of imagination, ambition, ſelf-intereſt, ſympathy, theopathy, and the moral ſenſe, exhibited by Dr. Hartley: all which are the ſame ſenſitive ideas by aſſociation amalgamated into a thouſand forms; like the fabulous Proteus,

Omnia transformant ſeſe in miracula rerum.

How far the ſketch, I have given, be juſtly deſcriptive of Dr. Hartley's principles, muſt be left to your judgment, and the diſcernment of thoſe, who have peruſed his theory. I once flattered myſelf, as I told you in the beginning of this letter, that it would be in my power to exhibit a ſhort view of this ſyſtem, eaſily intelligible to every reader; but I begin now to apprehend it will be fully underſtood only by ſuch, as are converſant in metaphyſical enquiries. A wide and extenſive ſyſtem, contracted to the narrow ſpan of a few pages, becomes an object, only decypherable by the cloſeſt inſpection. However

I am

I am confident, that I have not omitted one idea, ſtrictly aſſociated with the ſubſtance of the theory. Should it be found that the Doctor's explications ſometimes deviate from the principles, as here ſtated; let the inference be, either that the ſyſtem is itſelf inapplicable to ſome particular phenomena, or elſe that the good man now and then forgets himſelf. *Quandaque bonus dormitat*, hath been the caſe of many very reſpectable authors.

From another quarter, paſt all poſſibility of a doubt, can be demonſtrated the legitimacy of my delineation, relative to the doctrine of this theory; it is, from the laſt inferences drawn by the Doctor in favour of *human mechaniſm*. If that his final and favourite concluſion be juſt, then is all that I have ſaid moſt rigorouſly true. For if man be a neceſſary being, that is, a mere automaton in all his evolutions; it is evident that *every* mental proceſs is a mechanical effect, as I have ſhewn; and therefore as well derivable from vibratory motions, as from any other ſource. But I expect you will tell me that my theory is accurate, and that both

Hartley and yourſelf underſtood the doctrine in the preciſe ſenſe, I have affixed to it.

You muſt now, Sir, give me leave to preſent you, in my next, with a view of another ſyſtem, with which you are very well acquainted, and to place it on a line of parallel with the doctrine, I have juſt exhibited. Yourſelf and the public ſhall decide their reſpective merits.----Farewell.

March 22,

LETTER VI.

REVEREND SIR,

AGREEABLY to my promiſe, having treated you with a general delineation of your favourite theory, I muſt now take a view of the doctrine of *inſtinctive principles*, as held out by the Doctors Reid, Beattie and Oſwald, though there be nothing in the retroſpect, either inviting or ſatisfactory. How many admirers that extraordinary ſyſtem met with, through the courſe of ſome years, from its firſt appearance, and what in all probability will ſoon be its fate, diſregard and oblivion, I need not mention. The moral reflection is;

that in this it has ſhared the common lot of other ſimilar productions; and that the ſame hungry gulph will ſtill continue to abſorb the many unſubſtantial *theories* of this and of future ages. To your ſtrenuous endeavour, Sir, is principally owing the triumph, which *reaſon* is daily gaining over that ſyſtem of *inſtinct* and uſurped rights of *intuition*. It is my ſincere wiſh that the doctrine, you are labouring to eſtabliſh on its ruins, may be really promotive of the reign of reaſon and virtue. But here, I own, I have my apprehenſions;

----*Timeo Danaos & dona ferentes.*

Should it appear, from a fair diſplay of both ſyſtems, that yours is equally inimical to *reaſon*, or even more ſo, than the philoſophy of Scotland, what muſt we ſay? It will ſcarcely be ſaid, that *truth*, *virtue*, and *religion* have many obligations to you, notwithſtanding your warm profeſſions of ſtepping forth *ſolely* to maintain their rights. How far you may be then content *to cover your head with infamy*, and ſubmit to the harſh appellation of a *bold and inſolent innovator*, muſt be left to your own humility and moderation. I

Now

Now to the ſyſtem of *common ſenſe*, which I ſhall chiefly copy from your own deſcription of it.

" The term *common ſenſe*, ſays Dr. Beattie, p. 45 of his eſſay, has in modern times been uſed by philoſophers to ſignify that power of the mind, which perceives truth or commands belief, not by progreſſive argumentation, but by an *inſtantaneous*, *inſtinctive*, and *irreſiſtible impulſe*, derived neither from education, nor habit, but from nature, acting independently on our will, whenever the object is preſented, according to an eſtabliſhed law, and therefore not improperly called ſenſe; and acting in a ſimilar manner upon all, or, at leaſt, upon a great majority of mankind, and therefore properly called *common ſenſe*." P. 122, " The mind by its own innate force, and in conſequence of an *irreſiſtible* and *inſtinctive impulſe* infers the future from the paſt, *without the intervention of any argument*." ---P. 126, " Reaſoning from analogy, when traced up to its ſource, will be found in like manner to terminate in a certain *inſtinctive propenſity*, implanted in us by our maker."

This

This ſame common ſenſe is termed by Dr. Oſwald, in his *Appeal*, the principle, which diſtinguiſhes *every individual of the human race*; the very *characteriſtic of rationality*; which pronounces with *quickneſs*, *clearneſs* and *indubitable certainty* on all *primary truths*, and was intended by our maker to be an almoſt *infallible direction in the whole conduct of life*, and eſpecially in matters of *religion*.

Agreeably to the definition of this extenſive principle, ſo clearly delivered by Dr. Beattie, it was firſt employed by Dr. Reid of Glaſgow to eſtabliſh, by an infallible proof, the exiſtence of external objects, and their reſpective properties, the idea and belief of our own exiſtence, and of the exiſtence of certain thoughts, purpoſes, and diſpoſitions of mind in other men, &c. as it is fully ſtated in his *Enquiry*.

Dr. Beattie then extended it to the diſcovery of *truth*, holding it out as its infallible *teſt* and *criterion*. He conſiders it in the light of a peculiar ſpecies of inſtinct, very different from Mr. Locke's idea of *judgment*, in the firſt inſtance, which reſults from the compariſon

pariſon of ideas. It admits of no appeal to *reaſon*, properly conſidered, as you obſerve, which any perſon might be at liberty to examine and diſcuſs; but on the contrary, every man is thereby taught to think himſelf authoriſed to pronounce deciſively upon every queſtion, according to his preſent *feeling* and perſuaſion, under the notion of its being ſomething original, inſtinctive, ultimate and uncontrovertible. Thus certain particular maxims, as that of the exiſtence of a material world, are adopted as *ſelf-evident truths*, which to other philoſophers appear ſuſceptible of a ſatisfactory refutation. Hence alſo is the *judgment* (it is again your own remark) degraded to the level of the ſenſes. *Truth* itſelf becomes changeable and arbitrary, as relative to particular conſtitutions, like the perceptions of any of our external ſenſes.--- Nor is this doctrine ſolely reſtrained to *firſt principles*, ſay you; for though every truth, that is ſuppoſed to be diſcovered by this infallible and irreſiſtible light, ſhould be termed a firſt principle, ſtill it would not be ſuch in the general and philoſophical acceptation; becauſe each man's own feelings are ſuppoſed

to

to determine what is *certainly* to be believed, and what not.

This ſame common ſenſe, which the Doctor eſtabliſhes as the *teſt of truth*, he alſo erects into the ſtandard of *moral obligation*, expreſsly excluding all reaſoning on the ſubject. You are to be grateful for a favour received; you are to obey God, becauſe you *feel*, that ſuch is your duty. Thus the injunctions of a well-informed and ill-informed judgment are made to reſt upon the ſame principle.

Dr. Oſwald, even more ſanguine than his brethren, carries ſtill higher the influence of this grand principle, extending it to the fundamental doctrines and duties of morality, which compriſe the whole of natural religion, the evidences of Chriſtianity, and even the more eſſential articles of Chriſtian faith.

Reaſon, in the mind of Dr. Oſwald, is to be conſidered as the ſource of much evil and miſchief; to which, in their diſputes, divines and philoſophers have often very erroneouſly had

had recourſe, whilſt every thing, they ought to have wiſhed for, might have been obtained, without any trouble, by applying to *common ſenſe*.

From this general view of the doctrine of inſtinctive principles, as maintained by the Scotch philoſophers, and which, I am ſure, you will approve, becauſe it is nearly verbatim extracted from your *Examination*, it appears, how pernicious ſuch tenets muſt prove, ſhould they be ever generally adopted. They open wide the door to fanaticiſm and every enthuſiaſtic conceit, erecting an inſtinctive feeling into the univerſal judge of truth, in every branch of morality and religion. They give to the *ſenſes* that ſuperior light, which had before been appropriated to the judgment, in diſtinguiſhing truth from falſhood; whilſt the dictates of the ſenſes are maintained to be irreſiſtible and infallible. Thus *reaſon* becomes an almoſt uſeleſs attribute of the human mind, and is only to be conſidered in the light of an auxiliary or an attendant on the great leading principle of common ſenſe. Knowledge no longer reſults from a juſt view of things and a comparing of ideas; nor is

a habit of accurate thinking acquired by a courſe of obſervation and perſeverant re-reflection; for, as Dr. Beattie declares, his favourite principle perceives truth, and commands belief, not by progreſſive argumentation, but by an inſtantaneous, inſtinctive, and irreſiſtible impulſe.---*Nunc opus aggredior.*

According to the Scotch ſchool, our *principal* ſtock of knowledge is derived from the dictates of *common ſenſe*; and is therefore the work of nature.---According to Dr. Hartley, the *whole* is from ideal *aſſociation*; and is therefore the work of *habit*.---Both principles are equally *neceſſary*, and equally *infallible* in their operations.---The bodily organs in both are conſidered as the vehicles or inſtruments of knowledge, on which when their proper objects act, ideas are generated in the mind, independently of the will, according to pre-eſtabliſhed laws.

The immediate phyſical cauſe of ideas Dr. Hartley will have to be *nervous vibrations*: whilſt the Scotch doctors without any minute inveſtigation, have recourſe to what they call, *conſtitutional propenſities*.---When ſenſations

tions are raiſed by the action of bodies upon us, Dr. Hartley goes no farther than the ſenſations themſelves, the immediate effects of impreſſions: whereas Dr. Reid, &c. inſiſt that, beſides the ſenſations, is at the ſame time excited the belief of the exiſtence of the objects themſelves with their properties; a belief ſuggeſted by an inſtinctive impulſe.--- But in both ſyſtems, every ſuch mental affection is a neceſſary and mechanical effect, how various or manifeſt ſoever.

The only difference betwixt them ſeems to be, that Dr. Hartley admits of no effect for which he does not aſſign, as the proper cauſe, ſome nervous vibration; whilſt the Doctors, without any ſufficient reaſon, are labouring to eſtabliſh others, which ſpring up immechanically, but however from ſome internal impulſe. As far therefore as ſenſations, ſenſitive ideas, and their neceſſary Scotch adjuncts go, the diſſimilarity of opinion is but trifling; they are all the effects of conſtitution or pre-eſtabliſhed laws.

What objection now can you have to this part of the ſyſtem, give me leave, Sir, to aſk,

excepting from the ſingle head of an arbitrary principle being eſtabliſhed, as the ſource of ſuch affections, which moſt probably hath no foundation in nature. This, you may tell me, is objection enough? However as long as it is confined ſolely to the objects of ſenſe, it matters little. Nothing from thence follows inimical to reaſon, or virtue, or religion. Of what import is it, whether I am inclined to infer, from a ſuppoſed impulſive feeling, that an external world really exiſts; or whether, from a certain train of aſſociated ideas, I am drawn to believe ſuch exiſtence barely probable? Philoſophy may be more or leſs intereſted in the deciſion; but it is not from that quarter, your zeal appears to have taken its ſtrongeſt doſe of animation. Come we therefore to ſomething of higher moment.

Dr. Beattie, as has been obſerved, erects his common ſenſe into an unerring criterion of *truth*; by which means all argumentation is ſecluded, and every appeal to reaſon rendered ſuperfluous; reaſon itſelf therefore becomes a very uſeleſs property.

In

In the opinion of Hartley and yourſelf, the capacity of perception or *perceptibility* is alone to be conſidered as *eſſential* to man. This it is, which takes in every truth, of which the human mind is capable, in a manner, as inſtantaneous and impulſive, as Dr. Beattie's common ſenſe. The various aſſociations, that have been formed in each mind, analogous to the nature of things, conſtitute to each being his ſum total of truths. Theſe aſſociations (I am forced to repeat) are a chain of effects, generated by a ſeries of vibrations, which the mind neceſſarily *perceives* or *feels*, (for the terms are ſynonymous) whenever ſuch particular cauſes begin to operate. Tell me, Sir, how *this perception* is diſtinguiſhable from the Scottiſh *intuition*: or what room is here given to argumentation, and the diſplay of the reaſoning powers? I greatly fear, this your favourite property, if nicely obſerved, will be found to make as bold encroachments on the province of reaſon, as that execrable common ſenſe.

Judgment, in its common acceptation, may perhaps be nothing more than a bare perception, or what Hartley calls a complex feel-

feeling of the coincidence of ideas; but, in general, there muſt be a *compariſon*, which as you again reſolve into a more complex feeling, it hath no ſuperiority over Dr. Beattie's principles. "That to us, ſays the laſt named gentleman, is truth, which we *feel* that we muſt believe, and that to us is falſhood, which we *feel* that we muſt diſbelieve."---"Aſſent and diſſent (Dr. Hartley p. 158.) muſt come under the notion of ideas, being only thoſe very complex internal feelings, which adhere by aſſociation to ſuch cluſters of words, as are called propoſitions in general, or affirmations and negations in particular." Alſo, p. 23, "Thus propoſitions in particular excite, *as ſoon as heard*, aſſent or diſſent; which aſſent and diſſent conſiſt chiefly of additional complex ideas, (or feelings) not included in the terms of the propoſition."---Whenever therefore the internal feeling, called aſſent, is aſſociated with a particular propoſition, you *feel* you muſt aſſent or believe; and when the oppoſite aſſociation hath been formed, you *feel* that you muſt diſſent or diſbelieve.

What is this, but judging of truth and falſhood by your feelings, in a manner the moſt

moſt impulſive and inſtantaneous? Certainly had the philoſophers, Hartley and Beattie, previouſly agreed on a union in ſentiment, they could not have expreſſed themſelves in terms more ſimilar and approximated. With what face then, in direct oppoſition to your maſter, could you aſſert, p. 134, of your *Examination*, "That the faculty by which we perceive truth, is the fartheſt poſſible from any thing, that reſembles a *ſenſe?*" For what can poſſibly approach nearer to a ſenſe than an *internal feeling*, which judgment, aſſent, and diſſent, are by Dr. Hartley defined to be?

Your remark on the paſſage juſt cited from Dr. Beattie is, (p. 125) "To me this doctrine (of feeling truth and falſhood) appears to be entirely ſubverſive of all truth; ſince ſpeaking agreeably to it, all that we can ever ſay is, that certain maxims and propoſitions appear to be true with reſpect to *ourſelves*, but how they appear to *others* we cannot tell; and as to what they are in *themſelves*, which alone is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the *truth*, we have no means of judging at all; for we can only ſee with our own eyes, and judge by our own faculties, or rather feelings."

If

If this be the only bad inference deducible from the Doctor's notion, I ſuſpect, it is ſecure enough. Truth *in itſelf* is doubtleſs ſomething *abſolute* and *immutable*, being the univerſal nature of things; but as it is contained in particular maxims and propoſitions, what judgment can we form of it, only from our own faculties? we can only ſay, how ſuch propoſitions appear to ourſelves; how they may appear to others, can not poſſibly be determined. If truth, both in its abſolute and relative capacity, muſt ever to all men be the ſame, how happens it, that you and Dr. Beattie think ſo differently on the ſame ſubject? The fact is, you ſee with your *own* eyes, and judge by your *own* feelings, which are not the eyes and the feelings of other men: or, to ſpeak in a ſtyle more ſtrictly Hartleyan, where different aſſociations have been formed, neceſſarily every mental proceſs muſt be different.

It is ſcarcely poſſible for two men to think *preciſely* alike on any one ſubject; becauſe either their bodily organization, or circumſtances of life, or both, muſt be always greatly diſſimilar. The effects of ſuch heterogeneity---

neity---but I am idly commenting on a paſſage, which, I am well aſſured, dropt from your pen at a time, your perceptions were not accurately aſſociated with any regular cluſter of ideas.

It muſt moreover be candidly allowed, that the inſtinctive ſyſtem bids fairer for eſtabliſhing uniformity of opinion amongſt men, than any other ſentiment whatever. *Inſtinctive feelings* are ſuppoſed to be congenial with human nature; they are therefore univerſally ſimilar, and muſt in all circumſtances operate in a regular and uniform manner. On the contrary, your doctrine of aſſociation muſt inevitably be productive of the greateſt heterogeneity in ſentiment poſſible. For every the leaſt anomaly in the nervous ſyſtem; every circumſtance in life, and every accident, will form an aſſociation different from that of every other man, who hath not been placed, without the leaſt variation, in the ſame ſcenes of action. Yet this can never happen. Where aſſociations are different, every thing elſe, you know, muſt correſpond. You may then ſay, what appears to yourſelf to be truth; but

how the ſame thing may appear to another man, is out of your power to aſſert.

" As perſons," obſerves Dr. Hartley, p. 22, " who ſpeak the ſame languge, have however a different uſe and extent of words, ſo, though mankind in all ages and nations, agree in general in their complex and decomplex ideas, yet there are many *particular diſferences* in them; and theſe differences are greater or leſs, according to the difference, or reſemblance, in age, conſtitution, education, profeſſion, country, age of the world, &c. *i. e.* in their impreſſions and aſſociations."

As the moſt rational aſſent to any propoſition, is ſaid by Dr. Hartley, to proceed from a cloſe aſſociation of the ideas, ſuggeſted by the propoſition, with the idea or internal feeling belonging to the word *truth*, it follows, that every ſpecies of aſſent is a neceſſary and irreſiſtible perception, excluding all reaſoning and progreſſive argumentation, in the ſenſe generally applied to theſe terms.

Reaſon hath been hitherto conſidered by philoſophers as an active and ſuperior power of

of the mind, by which in a regular proceſs, one thing is inferred from another. It was by the energy and expanſive ſight of reaſon, that Sir Iſaac Newton, from the caſual view of an apple falling from a tree, demonſtrated by what laws the whole planetary ſyſtem gravitated to their central ſun. But if reaſon be that mechanical perception, deſcribed by Dr. Hartley, never certainly would I quarrel with the man, who ſhould rather chuſe to fancy his common ſenſe alone, or any inſtinctive tendency, a ſufficient criterion of truth, without the intervention of any argument. No longer, Sir, inveigh againſt the doctrine of inſtinct, as deſtructive of all reaſoning and philoſophical inquiry; but cordially join hands with Meſſrs. Beattie, Reid and Oſwald, in mutually labouring to accompliſh the great work, you have begun, of ſtripping man of every attribute, that is moſt valuable and dear to him, and of reducing him to the level of the fowls of the air and the beaſts of the field. We will call it a *Bellum Sociale*, or the *Family Compact* againſt man. Indeed as man is generally honoured with the dignified appellation of *monarch* or *king* of this nether world, it is not ſurpriſing,

you ſhould attempt to curtail his prerogative, and deaden the luſtre of his regal crown.

It would be ſuperfluous to continue this contraſt much farther, becauſe it is evident that, how far ſoever the doctrine of inſtinct ſhould be carried either in its application to truth in general, or in the particular departments of philoſophy, morality and religion, it will always be found, that Dr. Hartley's theory is equally uniform in aſſigning the ſyſtem of aſſociation, by which the ſame problems are to be ſolved. But, as I have ſo often remarked, whenever any phenomenon of the human mind is explained by aſſociation, then a cauſe is produced, in its nature as impulſive and neceſſary, as can poſſibly be the moſt unerring inſtinct; with this only difference that your ſyſtem muſt be productive of eternal diſcordance and variety in opinion and in feelings. The language of the paſſions for inſtance, according to Dr. Reid, is inſtictive, and by conſequence univerſally the ſame in all ages and nations: whereas you aſſert, that they acquire all their power to affect us from particular aſſociations, and that therefore a child might be pleaſed by a frown,

and

and frightened by a ſmile. Your ſyſtem, I own, may perhaps be equally favourable to the virtues of humility and moderation; for what can be more humiliating than the reflexion that, provided ſuch aſſociations have taken place, you are as much neceſſitated to appear in your preſent character, as a body impelled by any force muſt move in the line of direction? If unhappily, from a bad education, evil aſſociations have been cemented, what may not be apprehended from ſo ſtubborn a propenſity?

The obſervation of Dr. Beattie, relative to a man defective in common ſenſe, may at leaſt be applied to ſuch a character, and be thought but a trifling evil; "That a peculiar modification of ſcepticiſm, or credulity, or levity, will to the end of his life diſtinguiſh him from other men."

Alſo is your notion equally favourable to fanaticiſm and bigotry: for the man, who is taught to believe, that all is conducted by a train of mechanical impulſe, will think himſelf as much neceſſitated to purſue each warm impreſſion, as he who truſts his conſcience to

to the infallible guidance of inſtinct or interior lights. He may be either that poor prieſt-ridden mortal, whoſe blindneſs you ſo pathetically lament; or he may be obliged to ſubſcribe the *Scotch confeſſion of faith*; or, which is not leſs extraordinary, he may *perceive himſelf rather inclined* to diſmember his native *creed*, and to diſſent from almoſt every article of the Chriſtian belief. Such are the neceſſary effects of preformed aſſociations.

As in the great world of matter phenomena are ſaid to be ſimilar, when produced by a ſimilar cauſe: ſo likewiſe it muſt be in the microcoſm of man; where though the operating cauſes may be thought to be different, the effects will ſtill be the ſame, neceſſary and impulſive, as long as the *mode* of production be ſimilar. Inſtinct is infallible, ſo alſo is aſſociation: what therefore is true of one, relative to the good or bad conſequences derivable from it, is likewiſe true of the other.---But I dare advance a ſtep further, and prove that Hartley's ſyſtem, of the two, is much the more dangerous. As far indeed as inſtinct is carried, I allow it to be nearly allied, in its conſequences, to your favourite theory;

theory: but then from the letters, you ſubjoined to your *Examination*, it appears that, notwithſtanding the vague mode of expreſſion ſo common in their reſpective works, the Scotch Doctors do not really mean to extend their ſyſtems to thoſe lengths, you and others were inclined to imagine. Even the Dr. Oſwald, the moſt ſanguine of the three, in his letter to you, ſeems to confine his notions to primary truths; and Dr. Beattie expreſly tells you: "If your meaning p. 5 is, that I repreſent common ſenſe as ſuperſeding almoſt all reaſoning about religion, natural and revealed, you charge me with a doctrine, which I do not, and never did believe, and which is no where either inſerted or implied in any thing *I* ever wrote." And a little after, "My doctrine is only this, that all reaſoning terminates in firſt principles, and that firſt principles admit not of proof, becauſe reaſoning cannot extend in infinitum."

Notwithſtanding theſe poſitive after-declarations, I cannot help thinking, but they certainly in their works mean their principles ſhould be underſtood to operate far beyond the narrow boundaries of firſt principles and ſelf-

ſelf-evident axioms. If they do not; we muſt conclude either that the language of the Tweed is above the comprehenſion of Engliſhmen, or that the Scots gentlemen's labour was indeed very vain and nugatory. Still their common ſenſe hath its fixed limits, beyond which the reaſoning powers are freely allowed to exert themſelves. For after that leading principle, according to their hypotheſis, hath regulated a certain ſeries of perceptions, relative to the exiſtence and common properties of bodies, and hath pointed out to us primary truths, and their more immediate conſequences in the various branches of ſcience; then it is thought neceſſary to call in the aſſiſtance of reaſon, which riſing from ſo ſure a foundation, may then ſteadily purſue truth through its unnumbered windings and progreſſive evolutions. This I conceive to be the real, or at leaſt the only rational, meaning of the inſtinctive ſyſtem.

As then the powers of mind are all permitted to operate, after the inſtinctive principles have performed their duty, it is clear that man is again reſtored to what appeared his eſſential rank of being. He begins to reaſon,

ſon, to compare ideas, to purſue enquiry by perſiſting in a due courſe of obſervation and reflection, to diſcriminate the nice bounderies, which divide ſenſe from reaſon, and the various evolutions of his own mind. In ſhort he ranges, with curious attention, through the wide regions of truth; noting the different ſteps, that lead to it, by converging lines, and carefully diſtinguiſhing the falſe lights of fancy or paſſion from the cooler inveſtigations of the reaſoning faculties. With the ſame analytical and wary obſervation, quitting the paths of philoſophy, he enters on the ſtudy of the other ſciences, and maſters, by degrees, their enormous heights.

Now hath the northern ſchool evidently gained a tranſcendent ſuperiority over you; for whilſt Dr. Hartley is drawing out from man his ſtores of knowledge, by the heavy laws of mechaniſm, and explaining cauſes and effects, as you do the phænomena of the air-pump; Dr. Beattie, in the mean while, hath unbound the energetic powers of a rational and intelligent being, and given them to rove whereſoever *inclination* might determine their flight. Your man, labouring un-

der the ſevere preſſure of vibrations, and ſolely actuated by their influence, may be perhaps the maſs of clay, which was moulded by the hand of Prometheus; but he is never that being, formed to the image and reſemblance of infinite perfection, on whoſe countenance was *breathed the breath of life* by the Deity in perſon.

I will teaſe you, Sir, no longer with the diſcuſſion of a ſubject, which, I am ſure, muſt give you diſpleaſure. It is ſufficient to have ſhewn that your doctrine is never ſuperior to that of common ſenſe, and that every objection, made by you againſt the latter, particularly with regard to truth and free enquiry in philoſophy and religion, may be returned upon yourſelves.

If then the Scotch ſyſtem, as you ſo ſtrenuouſly inſiſt, muſt be rejected by every man, who cares for truth, virtue and religion, what, Sir, will be the fate of Dr. Hartley's Theory?---Farewell.

March 26.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

REVEREND SIR,

IF the ſyſtems of *aſſociation* and *inſtinct* be chargeable with the ſame unphiloſophical and pernicious conſequences, relative to truth, virtue and religion, as, I truſt, hath clearly appeared from my laſt letter, they undoubtedly merit the ſame ſevere treatment; to be anathematized, exploded with ſcorn, and marked with the black ſtigma of infamy. You, Sir, I am confident, will be the firſt to give the alarm, and to hold out to public deteſtation your once admired theory, if, laying

ing aſide every partial and intereſted view, you can conſider it, as really fraught with any evil tendency. Becauſe, as you have had the unſpeakable happineſs of a very ſtrict and religious education, you know; it follows, that the moſt diſtant proſpect of immorality muſt affect you greatly. I am fond of repeating a remark, which ſeems to give you ſo ſenſible a pleaſure. This, it was that called up all your apoſtolic zeal againſt the doctrine of common ſenſe. I ſhall ſoon expect to hear, when you have duly conſidered the dark ſide of Hartley's theory, (a ſide, from which hitherto you ſeem to have turned your eyes) of ſome ſignal action from you; ſuch as religiouſly committing to the flames the darling ſyſtem, and then announcing to the public a new philoſophical profeſſion of faith.---But as you may again tell me, or ſome friend may do it for you, that truth is to be ſpoken at all times, and that a ſyſtem may be philoſophically true, though it ſhould prove hurtful in its application to life and morals, I will therefore farther conſider the doctrine of aſſociation in its internal principles, and weigh them in the juſt ſcales of reaſon and philoſophy.

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However it is my opinion, that no ſentiment ſhould be ever promulgated, which will not prove practically beneficial; and it may properly be aſked, whether a ſentiment can be internally true, which is not alſo calculated, more or leſs, to promote the general good of mankind?

Dr. Hartley's theory, as appears from my general view of it, may be conſidered either with reſpect to *vibrations*, the univerſal phyſical cauſe; or with reſpect to the effect, *ſenſations* and *ideas*, in their ſimple ſtate, and various complex aſſociations.

From the niceſt obſervations on the texture and diſpoſition of the nerves, and the general mode of impreſſion from external bodies, the vibratory doctrine ſeems highly pleaſing and ſatisfactory. Nor can it at all be doubted but ſomething, at leaſt ſimilar to tremulous motion, is the immediate inſtrument of ſenſations and other innumerable mental affections. To require an *evident* analogy between cauſe and effect, is aſking too much, where it is not in the power of the moſt minute obſerver to diſcover the mode of operation. It ſuffices that experience,

rience, the beſt guide to truth, ſhould uniformly point out a ſeries of effects, which always, in the moſt juſt accord, anſwer to a particular order of impreſſions.

You are diſpoſed to differ from your maſter in thinking that, the ſum total of mental affections may be reſolved into mere mechanical vibrations. This notion I have proved to be abſurd and impracticable; otherwiſe indeed, it might have aſſociated very well with your Doctor's ſyſtem. For where all is cauſe and effect according to the heavy laws of matter, it ſeems ſuperfluous to require the preſence of an immaterial ſubſtance, could matter alone perform the whole work. Senſible of this difficulty, he choſe to form *his* man of ſoul and body; but that the ſpiritual part might have no pretext to glory in its ſuperiority, he invidiouſly deſpoiled it of all its high endowments, and bad it ſervilely ſubmit to all the mandates of the body. Thus the ſoul from being conſidered as a ſubſtance ſupremely active, and gifted with the powers of reaſoning and of ruling the motions of the body, is let down to the level of a being, diveſted of every real faculty, made paſſive and

and inert, and ſolely capable of receiving impreſſions, as a bit of wax takes every figure that is preſſed upon it. That ſuch is the ſoul of Dr. Hartley, I refer to his own *obſervations on man*, and the general view I have given of his ſyſtem. Little ſolicitous for the company of ſuch a ſtupid partner, you, Sir, poſitively decline all connexion with *Soul*, and humbly ſubmit to rank with ſolitary matter.

As things are got ſo far, I ſee no reaſon, why, with a little of your advice, the ingenious Mr. Cox might not be able to enrich his collection with two or three *men-machines*, of his own conſtruction, that might really operate in a *human* manner, might gradually advance to the ſummit of knowledge in all the arts and ſciences, and perhaps preſent the public with their ſeveral diſcoveries in religion, philoſophy and politics.

The *inertia* of the human ſoul, on which Dr. Hartley's theory principally turns, is in my opinion, alone ſufficient to invalidate the whole ſyſtem. It is ſubverſive of every received notion, and appears to be contradicted by

by an interior conviction of an exerted force, wherein, on many occaſions, it is impoſſible we can be deceived. That many of our affections follow mechanically the nervous agitation, is not at all to be doubted. Such are, in the firſt place, all *ſenſations*. When the organs of ſenſe are impreſſed by their proper objects, and in conſequence thereof a tremulous motion communicated to the nerves, a mental modification, a *ſenſation*, is inſtantly raiſed, whether we are willing or not. When the eye is open, it muſt ſee every object, that acts upon it. Such effects are neceſſary and mechanical.

Senſitive ideas alſo, which ſpring up in the mind, whenever the fibres are agitated in a manner ſimilar to the firſt received motion, and are therefore revived ſenſations, may be conſidered as mechanical effects. This happens in the caſes of memory, imagination, and in dreams. But though all ſuch affections be the immediate and neceſſary reſult of vibrations, and conſequently the mind in their reception be ſtrictly paſſive; yet in every ſuch caſe, a certain concomitant *feeling*

or

or *perception* is called up, moſt evidently not the *direct* effect of any known vibration.

Let us ſuppoſe the two firſt bodies, that act upon the organ of ſmell in a child, to be a roſe, and a lump of aſſa fætida. Inſtantly two ſenſations are raiſed, the one *pleaſing*; the other *diſpleaſing*, or painful. The child *diſtinguiſhes* one from the other; it *loves* the one, and *diſlikes* the other. Remove the roſe, and let the aſſa fætida be ſtill applied; the child will not only continue to *diſlike* the latter, but will alſo be *ſenſible* of the abſence of the former, and probably *wiſh* for its renewal. Re-apply the roſe; the child will, with additional pleaſure, inhale its odour, and be *conſcious*, at the ſame time, that it is a ſmell ſimilar to that it enjoyed before. Remove the aſſa fætida it will *rejoice* its in abſence. How many affections have we here, raiſed by a kind of magic in the infant mind, which can not be called the *direct* effects of the vibrations, excited by the two bodies! *Diſtinguiſhing*, *liking* and *diſliking*, *ſenſe of abſence*, *longing*, *additional pleaſure*, *conſciouſneſs of ſimilarity*, *rejoicing* for the removal of pain.

In the abſence of thoſe bodies, when again the ſame nerves by any cauſe whatever are put in motion, miniature ſenſations or ſenſitive ideas are raiſed in the child, which likewiſe, in their turn, will be attended by the juſt mentioned concomitant feelings.---That ſomething ſimilar happens to ourſelves, every moment of life, I refer to your own perceptions: obſerve them with minute attention, and they will tell you that ſo it is. I rather choſe to illuſtrate my aſſertion from the example of a child, becauſe in ſuch a mind no previous aſſociations can poſſibly have been formed, by which you might fancy thoſe perceptions could be accounted for. Dr. Hartley's theory is therefore defective in its firſt ſtage of application; becauſe no ſufficient reaſon can be aſſigned to the origin of the affections, I have inſtanced, without overthrowing the eſſential baſis of his ſyſtem; which is, that every mental modification is the immediate effect of a nervous vibration. To ſay that ſuch attendant feelings ariſe from motion communicated to a certain train of correſponding fibres, though the mode of communication remain a ſecret, would be highly unphiloſophical: beſides, ſuch a ſuppoſition

poſition is abſolutely impoſſible in the caſe of primary ſenſations, when no previous aſſociations are allowed to have exiſted. Without quitting the regions of ſenſations, memory and fancy, let us farther enquire, whether any other effects may be diſcovered, inalliable with your ſyſtem.

In every firſt impreſſion, and renewal of ſenſation, the mind is awakened into a particular ſtate, we call *attention*.---I might have mentioned this before.---Suppoſe your ear to be affected with the ſound of muſic: it pleaſes you, and you *attend* to it. The proper effect of the tremulous motion, excited in the organ, is the *mere ſenſation* of different ſounds: the *attention* given to them is a very diſtinct affection, of which each one is conſcious, but which cannot be conſidered as the effect of vibrations. *Attention* accompanies every mental modification of a certain degree of intenſity. Beſides this attention given to the ſound, the mind moreover *diſtinguiſhes* note from note, as the infant diſtinguiſhed the agreeable from the diſagreeable odour. This again is an effect not explicable on your hypotheſis.

The *comparing* ſenſations and ideas is a third effect, of which Dr. Hartley can aſſign no cauſe. Whether in comparing the mind be active or paſſive, matters not; it ſuffices at preſent that it cannot be ſhewn to ariſe from any vibration. All knowledge ſprings from compariſon; without it every ſenſation or idea is merely an inſulated perception. But as inſulated perceptions are the only proper and direct effects of vibrations, it follows, that all comparing of ſuch perceptions is an ulterior or adjoined affection of mind, to which your principles cannot extend.---Harmony, ſymmetry and beauty owe their very exiſtence to the percipient and *comparing* power in man. But the perception of the different actions of bodies on our organs is nothing, unleſs ſuch effects be moreover *compared*: and this it is, which gives to harmony, &c. all the reality they poſſeſs.---But I have even my doubts, whether *perception* itſelf can be conſidered as an effect of vibrations. For if every perception be not really *identified* to each ſenſation and idea, which it accompanies, it is certainly a diſtinct modification; and if ſo, what is its generative cauſe?

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Senſations and ideas are not always *perceived*; but, though unperceived, they muſt really exiſt, becauſe every vibration, as an active cauſe, muſt produce an effect: therefore is every perception of a ſenſation or idea diſtinct from the ſenſation and idea, and conſequently ulteriorly to be accounted for.--The general inference then is, that *attending*, *diſtinguiſhing*, *comparing*, and even *perceiving* are diſtinct affections, not explicable by Dr. Hartley's theory.

The bare ſuppoſition of a *voluntary* effect, in a ſyſtem of *univerſal mechaniſm*, is abſurd beyond all conception. Such, however, is Dr. Hartley's hypotheſis, relative to a ſpecies of motion in man, he terms *voluntary*. Motion in bodies is ſaid to be *neceſſary*, becauſe it is produced by an impulſive force; Why not therefore in man? But if in man it loſes the character of *neceſſary*, as ſpringing from an internal principle; the ſame may alſo be applied to the expanſive motion of elaſtic bodies. The Doctor inſiſts that, his motion is at once *neceſſary* and *voluntary*. The word *voluntary* ſuppoſes the action, ſo denominated, to flow from the *will*: The will by him is defined to be that *ſtate of mind*, *which immediately precedes*

cedes the action. But as in this caſe, the mind itſelf is not the *phyſical* cauſe of the action; it is ridiculous to call ſuch actions voluntary. The real cauſe is the nervous vibration propagated to the muſcle. It is produced as mechanically as the moſt automatic motion. The mind, as generally underſtood to be a ſubſtance endowed with the power of acting, does juſt nothing. Yet, if we are not greatly deceived, there are ſome actions in the human œconomy, which a man is entitled ſtrictly to call *his own:* if ſo, Dr. Hartley again errs moſt egregiouſly.

En paſſant, I will juſt obſerve how unphiloſophical it is, to allow a real active capacity to the nervous ſyſtem, (for there, one nerve is made to communicate its motion to others, which can only be done by a phyſical impulſe) whilſt the ſoul is aſſerted to be void of every the leaſt energy, and is reduced to a ſtate of abſolute torpor and inaction.

Judgment alſo, which is the perception of the agreement or diſagreement of ideas, is another mental affection not generated by vibrations. To the mind, for example, are preſent two or more ideas: the mind not only

only perceives their preſence, but moreover ſeems often to dwell upon them, if their coincidence be not inſtantly apparent, and then aſſerts their agreement or diſagreement. In ſimilar proceſſes of a more complex nature, the intervention of a third idea or term is neceſſary, before the truth or falſhood can be diſcovered. However, in every caſe, either of ſimple judgment, or of reaſoning, an affection is excited, evidently diſtinct from the effects of the nervous agitation.

I will allow *thinking* in general to be nothing more than the perception of ideas, either ſenſitive or intellectual, as they are generated by direct impreſſions, or by all the complicated modes of vibratory aſſociations: ſtill, throughout, the *thought* or perception is not the idea perceived; it is ſomething diſtinct, and therefore more properly may be termed a mental property, which, according to a preeſtabliſhed order, is called into action, whenever ideas are preſented. Were it not ſo, what would the moſt complex aſſociations of ideas be, but ſo many independent detached effects?

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In place of ideas, let us conſider their productive cauſes; for as cauſes and effects are mutually relative, the ſame thing is applicable to either. *Vibrations* then, the cauſes of ideas, are in themſelves barely diſtinct nervous motions, in number equal to the moved fibres. They may be compared to a ſeries of ſounds raiſed by the ſtroke of a plectrum. So alſo in man, as the vibrations are ſeverally diſtinct, their effects, the ideas in the mind, correſpond in the exacteſt order. A being *merely* ſuſceptible of ſuch impreſſions, would not in nature be raiſed above the rank of a very complex muſical inſtrument. Therefore man cannot reſt here: he *perceives* the effects excited in his ſoul, he *compares* them, and by the compariſon diſcovers either their coincidence with one another, or the want of it: in the firſt caſe they pleaſe him; as allied to ſomething, he calls *truth*; and in the ſecond, they diſpleaſe by deviating from that maſter object. But all theſe modes of perception, ſo viſible in *judgment* and in every reaſoning proceſs, are not effected by tremulous motion, and cannot therefore be reconciled with the vibratory doctrine. The ſame thing is likewiſe to be

ſaid of the different ſtates of mind, termed *doubting*, *believing*, *diſſenting*, &c. For though they owe their riſe to various trains of ideas, yet are they not the ideas themſelves, but certain very complex feelings, ſo called by Dr. Hartley; and conſequently not to be accounted for on his general plan. If they be feelings not congenial to the human mind, but raiſed by the ſole charm of aſſociation; or, as the Doctor will have it, purely of a *factitious* nature; then it might eaſily be, that a man ſhould doubt, or believe, or diſſent in an inverted order from all mankind, on points hitherto conſidered as ſelf-evident, as that two and two make four. But if *truth* be in itſelf any thing fixed and immutable; then in the mind of man muſt be faculties, analogouſly perceptive of it, and duly capable to diſcriminate its niceſt features, in every diſtant appearance, or unnatural junction with falſhood and uncertainty. Such faculties are diſplayed in the acts of comparing, doubting, aſſenting, &c. they are not therefore the mere tranſient effects of aſſociation.

Dr. Hartley's deſcription of the manner, by which he conceives ideas are aſſociated with

words, is, in general, exceedingly juſt and philoſophical. It is eaſily underſtood, how particular ſounds, uſed to expreſs ſenſible objects, may be ſo aſſociated with them, as always, when pronounced to excite their repreſentative ideas. Likewiſe that words, which denote intellectual objects and collections of other words, only become intelligible, from their being united to ſomething ſenſible, appears equally ſatisfactory.---I believe moreover that the ſenſible pleaſures and pains are the great originals, of which all the intellectual ones are but ſo many modifications; or, that they are the ſources, from whence all the intellectual pleaſures and pains are ultimately derived. Still, all this fine ſtructure can never be the work of capricious aſſociation alone: for as the firſt pleaſing and painful ſenſations point out a peculiar conſtitution of ſoul ſuſceptible of ſuch feelings, it is clear, that every ſimilar ſubſequent affection, how remote ſoever from the primitive feeling, muſt yet originate from the ſame principle. Were not this the caſe, I ſee not how it could poſſibly happen, that the feelings, the paſſions in all their gradations, and the intellectual pleaſures and pains

of

of mankind, ſhould be ſo nearly ſimilar. What few deviations from the common line, now and then appear, are eaſily accounted for from incidental aſſociated adjuncts.

Your opinion of the gradual formation of the ideas of *moral right and wrong*, from a great variety of aſſociated impreſſions, explains, I grant, that prodigious diverſity in the ſentiments of mankind, reſpecting the objects of moral obligation. For, as you well obſerve, if the idea of *moral obligation* were a ſimple idea, ariſing from the view of certain actions or ſentiments; why is it not as *invariable*, as the perception of colours or ſound? Yet how variable and diſcordant are men's opinions! We ſee one perſon practiſe as a moral duty, what another looks upon with abhorrence, and reflects on with remorſe. Nor can I think that, abſtracting from aſſociation, the mind, by any inſtinctive propenſion, ever forms a moral judgment concerning actions and affections.

But what muſt be ſaid of the *eternal reaſons and relations of things*; on which, it is by many writers ſuppoſed, morality of actions

is founded, and our judgment concerning them? The reaſons and relations of things are undoubtedly neceſſary, immutable and eternal. Of them a certain portion, which appertain to the preſent ſyſtem of human truths, is placed within our reach. Man's capacities are proportioned to their nature and degree of elevation. But if every perception be factitious; then, in ſpite of all internal reaſons and relations in the objects, our ſentiments might widely deviate from, and the conſequent actions be in direct oppoſition to every thing that is right and virtuous. To obviate ſuch deleterious effects, it appears, that an all-wiſe being muſt have provided ſome principle, innate to our very conſtitutions, whereby the charms of truth and virtue might be felt, and their reſpective rights immoveably fixed, in oppoſition to error and vice. This notion by no means excludes the doctrine of aſſociation; it only reſtrains a little the univerſal empire conferred upon it, by Dr. Hartley and yourſelf.

As in the general view of human knowledge appear on every ſide certain primary max-

maxims, which by a kind of native light flaſh upon the mind, ſo alſo muſt it be in the particular line of morality. When the truth of thoſe principles is once received, the growing ſtructure of ſucceeding knowledge riſes with ſecurity, and a wide ſimilarity in ſentiment muſt univerſally prevail. It is a fact that, the opinions of mankind, to a certain line, are exceedingly uniform, barring the ſmall deviations, that different education and climate will naturally produce. In the more diſtant concluſions, a greater heterogeneity begins to take place, which increaſes more and more, as we recede from the line of evidence and high probability. Yet all along a thouſand aſſociations are formed, which give a peculiar caſt to the general ſentiment, denoting modes of education, difference of age, prevailing faſhions, influence of climate, &c. Thus is the power of aſſociation rendered ſufficiently prevalent and extenſive. But to inſiſt that, the whole work of morality is from thence, is being far too ſanguine and precipitate. For though the firſt ideas of right and wrong ſhould be as invariable as the perceptions of colours or ſounds, ſtill the ſubſequent ſentiments and actions, from the

cauſes

cauſes juſt aſſigned, will naturally branch out into all the varieties, we ſo often meet with. But as no man ever appeared, who did not allow that the *whole was greater than a part*; ſo never was there a ſavage, ſo wild and unenlightened, who did not feel the evidence of the grand moral principle, *do as you would be done by*, whatever his actions, from paſſion or the like, might have been. I infer then, that there are certain truths, ſo congenial to the human mind, that independently of all aſſociation, their evidence muſt be perceived, as ſoon as preſented. And why ſhould this be more inconceiveable, than that particular impreſſions from external bodies, ſhould have been ſo adapted to our natures, as always to excite, in a determinate order, ſome pleaſing and ſome painful perceptions. In this point therefore is the ſyſtem of aſſociation again defective, and, as will be thought by many, in a matter of great moment to the cauſe of truth and morality.

As Dr. Hartley concludes his obſervations by ſaying, that he hath ſhewn, that all the affections and reaſonings of man are the factitious work of aſſociation; I will alſo cloſe this

this letter with a few general reflections on his doctrine.

Through the long ſeries of mental evolutions many things have been inſtanced, which appear, not to ariſe from the cauſes, the Doctor hath aſſigned. If therefore I have not been moſt flagrantly deceived, his theory is exceedingly imperfect; and you, Sir, have ſtrangely erred in holding it out, as the only rational plan, whereby the mental phenomena can be ſatisfactorily inveſtigated. To what a low ſtate is man indeed reduced, if all his affections, and all his ſtrongeſt efforts of reaſon be nothing more than a long ſeries of mechanical effects! He is no otherwiſe ſuperior to the brute animal, and perhaps to the plant, than as one machine is ſuperior to another, by a more complex aſſortment of parts.---To aſſert that all perception and knowledge is effected by aſſociation, as I have repeatedly obſerved, is to ſay in other words, that man hath neither attributes nor abilities, but that he is merely perceptive. The whole ſyſtem being thus reduced to a ſingle point, it appears not difficult to diſcover, from the leaſt attention to what paſſes within our own minds,

minds, whether that ſingle property, be all that man can boaſt of. In this light I have carefully viewed the ſubject, and therefore will aſſert, that we poſſeſs many other powers eſſentially different from perception. I know, indeed, how extenſive is the reach of that faculty; far more ſo than is generally imagined.

Another ſtrong objection to Hartley is, that not even perception itſelf can be the immediate effect of vibrations. This alſo hath been ſhewn. But when a *general* cauſe is aſſigned to *all* the effects, within a given ſphere, and it is at the ſame time, by others made evident, that more than half of ſuch effects, are not derivable from it; certainly ſo notorious an impoſition merits to feel the chaſtening rod of criticiſm. A man, when phyſical experiment and obſervation direct not his enquiries, is eaſily deceived by falſe lights: a theory may then be precipitately adopted, becauſe it pleaſes, and becauſe it may ſeem to unlock the ſecrets of ſome myſterious powers, which, when cooly conſidered, will prove very imperfect, and perhaps even glaringly falſe in its general application.

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The doctrine of vibrations and aſſociations I greatly admire, for its admirable ſimplicity and moſt palpable conformity to many mental phenomena; but then Dr. Hartley, I am confident, hath carried it much too far. This hath been no uncommon manæuvre with all fabricators of ſyſtems and airy theoriſts. Impatient that any effect ſhould riſe above their comprehenſion, ſuch philoſophers are determined to force every element of nature, how ſtubborn ſoever, to conform to their favourite ſcheme.——Farewel.

March 29.

marks on Dr. Hartley's obſervations. He hath placed the whole matter in the moſt clear and unambiguous light.---The doctrines of aſſociation and neceſſity are ſo intimately combined, that a ſimilar fate muſt ever attend them. If man be free, then is the Doctor's theory erroneous: but if it be proved, that man is a neceſſary agent, (pardon, ſir, the abſurd expreſſion) his whole ſyſtem is then moſt juſt and philoſophical.

"By the mechaniſm of human actions," ſays Dr. Hartley, p. 334, "I mean, that each action reſults from the previous circumſtances of body and mind, in the ſame manner, and with the ſame certainty, as other effects do from the mechanical cauſes; ſo that a perſon cannot do indifferently either of the actions *A*, and its contrary *a*, while the previous circumſtances are the ſame: but is under an abſolute neceſſity of doing one of them, and that only.---Agreeable to this, I ſuppoſe, that by free-will is meant a power of doing either the action *A*, or its contrary *a*; while the previous circumſtances remain the ſame."---The firſt is called *philoſophical neceſſity*, and the ſecond *philoſophical free-*

free-will.---He goes on "If by free-will be meant a power of beginning motion, this will come to the ſame thing; ſince, according to the opinion of mechaniſm, as here explained, man has no ſuch power; but every action or bodily motion, ariſes from previous circumſtances, or bodily motions already exiſting in the brain, or from vibrations, which are either the immediate effect of impreſſions then made, or the remote compound effect of former impreſſions, or both."---As there can be no freedom of actions where the above definitions of free-will are not applicable to them, the queſtion is thus placed on the moſt fair footing.

His firſt argument in favour of mechaniſm, the Doctor founds on the allowed fact of human actions proceeding from *motives*: "Motives, ſays he, act like all other cauſes. When the motive is ſtrong, the action is performed with vigour; when weak, feebly. When a contrary motive intervenes, it checks, or overrules, in proportion to its relative ſtrength, as far as one can judge. So that where the motives are the ſame, the actions cannot be different; where the motives are different, the actions

actions cannot be the ſame."---Such a ſeries of known facts, the Doctor thinks, as clearly evince, that *motives* are the *mechanical* cauſes of our actions, as the phenomena of nature tend to prove the mechanical operation of heat, diet, or medicine.

This reaſoning would be concluſive, did motives really act as do other cauſes. But there is a *moral*, as well as a *phyſical* mode of operation; elſe, whence aroſe the idea of *moral influence?* The firſt is applicable to motives; the ſecond to mechanical cauſes. The truth therefore is, not that motives, agreeably to Hartley's conception, like the heavier weight in a ballance, impel or determine a man to act, but that man from the view of the motives preſented to his mind, *determines himſelf* to act, by the free exertion of his own innate powers. On this ſuppoſition, indeed, he muſt poſſeſs a *ſelf-determining* capacity, as is evident; a capacity, in my opinion, ſo eſſential to his very being, that, without it, he could not be *man*; becauſe without it, excepting by organization alone, he would not be different from the common bodies, which ſurround him. But though motives

tives are not underſtood to act phyſically, ſtill the actions, to which they give riſe, will uniformly partake of their nature, by being relatively vigorous or feeble. For as the mind inclines to act from the view of motives, the more vivid theſe are, the more intenſe muſt be the exerted force, and vice verſa.---When I term motives *moral cauſes*, I would not be underſtood to mean, that motives have no phyſical effect upon us; for all action is phyſical: my meaning is, that motives do not *themſelves* produce our voluntary actions. Theſe are the direct effects of the ſelf-determining power. The motives, by means of vibrations, act on the mind, which is thereby rouſed and inclined itſelf to generate ſuch actions.

Having advanced thus far, let us ſuppoſe a man to make the ſelf-examination, the Doctor propoſes: let him conſider a ſhort time after any material action is paſt, whether, if he were once more placed in the ſame rigidly exact circumſtances, *he could poſſibly do otherwiſe than as he did.* His inference, you think, muſt be, that he could not poſſibly do otherwiſe; and therefore that he was neceſſitated to do the very thing, which he did.---On the other

other hand, my inference is, that, in the very ſame circumſtances, I ſhould again do the ſame thing; becauſe the ſame motives would always have a ſimilar influence, and conſequently my determination, to be *rational*, muſt be exactly relative to them. But then, in both caſes, of the firſt and ſecond determination, as the action followed the free determining power, and not any impulſive influence from the motives themſelves, ſuch actions I can ſtrictly call my own; nor have I the leaſt idea of any impoſſibility of my action being otherwiſe.

He tells us, in the ſecond place, that human actions are neceſſary, "Becauſe they all proceed from vibrations, which are allowed to be mechanical cauſes." But as it hath been proved that all our actions do not ſpring from *that* ſource, the force of that reaſoning falls to nothing.---Thirdly he ſuppoſes it exceedingly abſurd, and deſtructive of all abſtract reaſoning, that the action *A*, or its contrary *a* could equally take place, while the previous circumſtances remain preciſely ſimilar; "It is the ſame thing, he aſſerts, as affirming;

firming, that one or both of them might ſtart up into being, without any cauſe."— In this ſingle point are concentered the principal difficulties attending the doctrine of free-will.

It is a maxim univerſally true, that nothing can happen without a *ſufficient cauſe*, or reaſon of exiſtence; therefore no effect in the material world, in men, or even in the ſuperior regions of ſpirits, can poſſibly be produced, of which there is not an immediate cauſe. Cauſe and effect muſt be ever relative, and correſpondent. In circumſtances then rigidly ſimilar, as hath juſt been noticed, to imagine that the action *A*, or its contrary *a*, may equally follow, is in fact aſſerting, that an effect may ſtart up into being without any cauſe; for the cauſe to the action *A*, is to its contrary *a*, juſt as no cauſe, and *vice verſa*. But it will be urged, do not the Anti-neceſſarians affirm ſuch an indifference to be eſſential to human liberty? I anſwer—When a man conſiders certain motives, as they are offered to him, he ſees the propriety of acting in a manner anſwerable to ſuch motives; and therefore produces the action *A*. The contrary action *a* appears to him, at the ſame

time, abſurd; nor can it conſequently be joined with the ſame motives. Still he perceives, as it is he himſelf who is the author of *A*, that he hath likewiſe a complete and full power of generating *a*; but not without falling into an abſurdity. The action therefore *A*, or its contrary, may *poſſibly* follow the ſame rigid circumſtances; but, on that ſuppoſition, one will be *rational*, and the other *inconſiſtent* or *fooliſh*. This is applicable to all deliberate actions, when both ſides are duly conſidered. But if it be ſuppoſed, that a man only views one ſide of an object, in this caſe, the action *A*, and its oppoſite, cannot indifferently take place; but *A* will be ſo connected with a particular train of motives, as always to follow them neceſſarily. Yet may a man ſtill call ſuch an action his own; becauſe not the motives, but he himſelf is the cauſe of it. However, in ſimilar actions, we are not ſtrictly free. This often happens in the haſty ſtorms of paſſion; and mankind, from obſervation, have agreed to conſider ſuch actions, as more or leſs neceſſary and involuntary---In all deliberate caſes, wherein alone a man can be thought properly to act, he enjoys his freedom in the moſt extenſive

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ſenſe of the word; though, at ſuch times, the action *A* can alone with propriety correſpond to the given motives or circumſtances. From this explication nothing follows either deſtructive of abſtract reaſoning, or at all reſembling an effect void of ſufficient cauſe. For as all motives are calculated, in the ſame circumſtances, to raiſe ſimilar affections, there is the ſame baſis given, on which to ground the moſt preciſe reaſoning, whether the effect be derived from an immediate mechanical impulſe, as Dr. Hartley conceives it is, or whether by ſuch motives the mind be ſo actuated, as itſelf to generate the analogous effect. The moral is as *certain*, though not *neceſſitating*, as is the *phyſical* cauſe.

The principal objection to mechaniſm, the Doctor fancies, ariſes from the exiſtence of the *moral ſenſe*; but when it is conſidered, that this ſenſe (if in the human breaſt there be any ſuch thing, and if there be, it muſt itſelf overturn the grand principle of aſſociation) is made to ſpring up in the mind neceſſarily and mechanically, it evidently rather contributes to confirm, than to weaken the ſcheme of neceſſity, though not exactly

in the ſenſe maintained in your ſchool. The Doctor's elaborate diſcuſſion of this point to me then appears quite uſeleſs and trifling.

Now follow in regular order a long train of objections, which the Doctor himſelf, like a moſt honourable adverſary, boldly draws up againſt his own favourite doctrine.---The firſt is taken from our own internal feelings of freedom. His anſwer to this objection, as far as it regards a ſpecies of free-will, by him termed *popular* or *practical*, ſhall be conſidered hereafter.

Secondly, to the difficulty that "if man have not free-will, he is not an agent," he replies by obſerving, that if *agency* have its ſenſe determined, like other words, from the aſſociated appearances, all objection falls at once.---That is, if agency be defined to be no agency, but only the appearance of it, then may mechaniſm be conſiſtent with agency; becauſe under mechaniſm, ſpeaking, walking, &c. will appear to be actions, though really they are not, any more than the motion of a clock, or the whirling of a ſpinning-wheel. Therefore action in appearance

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and mechaniſm are conſiſtent, but real action and mechaniſm are incompatible and mutually deſtructive of each other.---At leaſt, the Doctor hereby makes a candid confeſſion of man's univerſal inertia and paſſive obedience.

To his third objection he anſwers; "that though man be ſubject to a neceſſity ordained by God, it does not follow that God himſelf is ſubject to a prior neceſſity."---But then, my good Doctor, if God is not ſubject to neceſſity, he is free; and if free, what ſpecies of freedom does he enjoy? Not merely that of a *popular* and *practical* nature; becauſe ſuch freedom, you know, is barely the power of doing what you deſire, of deliberating, ſuſpending, &c. or of reſiſting the motives of ſenſuality, ambition, reſentment, &c. (they are Hartley's own words.) It remains then that the Deity be *philoſophically free*, (there is no third ſpecies of freedom;) but if ſo, why may not man participate of his maker's attributes? And, what are we now to think of the many internal abſurdities and contradictions, with which, the Doctor would fain perſuade us, the notion of philoſophical liberty teems? He confirms his opinion of the Deity's

Deity's free-will by adding, "That according to the doctrine of mechaniſm, God is the cauſe of cauſes, the one only ſource of power;" therefore is he prior to every cauſe, and conſequently eſſentially free.---If the moſt declared enemy to neceſſity had ſought for the beſt argument, whereby to eſtabliſh the *poſſibility*, at leaſt, of human liberty, he could not have diſcovered any thing half ſo ſtrong in its favour, as this reaſoning of Dr. Hartley.

Fourthly he objects, that it may be ſaid, that men are perpetually impoſed on, unleſs they have free-will, ſince they think they have. "But here," adds he, "free-will is again taken in the popular ſenſe, and the man, who thinks himſelf free in this ſenſe, is not impoſed on."---What title this ſpecies of free-will may have to the appellation, ſhall be ſoon examined: I will now obſerve, that as *really* man is not free, in Dr. Hartley's ſentiment, whenever he thinks himſelf ſo, he is manifeſtly deceived, for he imagines himſelf poſſeſſed of a power, to which he has not the leaſt pretenſion.

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The fifth objection, "that the doctrine of mechaniſm may ſeem to deſtroy the notion of a particular providence altering the courſe of nature, ſo as to ſuit it to the actions of men," appears to make nothing againſt it. For as in both ſyſtems Almighty God is the cauſe of cauſes, and the ſource of all power; equally the whole univerſe is ſubject to his will, to rule and modify it at pleaſure, whether man be free, or whether he be ſubject to a code of laws, as fixed and neceſſitating, as are thoſe of the material world. Should man be free, ſtill have all his actions been eternally open to the divine inſpection, and to them hath been adapted the ſubordinate courſe of nature, perhaps in the beſt manner poſſible, or, more properly, in the manner that beſt ſuited the deſigns of infinite goodneſs and wiſdom.

As to what may be objected ſixthly, that all motives to good actions, and particularly to prayer, are taken away by denying free-will, the Doctor replies, that "according to the mechanical ſyſtem, prayer and good works are the means for obtaining happineſs, and that the belief of this is the ſtrongeſt of motives

tives to *impel* men to prayer and good works." ---Moſt undoubtedly, when a man hath had the unſpeakable happineſs of a ſtrict and religious education, and when the belief, juſt mentioned, hath ſtrongly poſſeſſed his mind, it is then as impoſſible that ſuch a perſon ſhould be a bad man, in the mechanical ſyſtem, as it is for a body, forcibly drawn by any power, not to correſpond to it; and the Doctor's reaſon for it is the beſt in the world, *i. e.* becauſe ſuch a man is *impelled* to prayer and good works. But ſhould a man unfortunately have been born out of the way of ſuch a virtuous education, or ſhould he have received a very bad one, (a thing which daily happens to many) by what motives can *he* be impelled to prayer and good works? By the impulſe of his aſſociated ideas he will be hurried into vice and irreligion; nor will reformation be ever in his power, becauſe virtuous impreſſions can never give a new determination to the whole nervous ſyſtem, that hath been callouſly modified into vice.

Seventhly, it is objected, that "neceſſity deſtroys the diſtinction between virtue and vice."---This, ſays the Doctor, is juſt as the

the words are defined. If virtue be defined obedience to the will of God, a courſe of actions proceeding from the love of God, or from benevolence, &c. free-will is not at all neceſſary; ſince theſe affections and actions may be brought about mechanically."---But if ſuch actions may be called virtuous, becauſe they mechanically follow a train of ideas, to which have been given the names of *obedience, love of God, benevolence*, &c. in the ſame ſenſe, may every mechanical effect in nature be termed virtuous, becauſe they all correſpond to a pre-eſtabliſhed ſyſtem; and thus the motions of a clock or watch will be ſo many acts of virtue. Or, if the latter effects may not receive this honourable appellation, becauſe to their immediate productive cauſes have not been given the names of love, obedience, &c. this will only prove them *nominally* different from the former. The time may therefore come, ſhould the mechanical doctrine be generally adopted, when a regular going clock may be called as virtuous and religious a being, as was Doctor Hartley, or is at preſent his faithful diſciple, the Reverend Dr. Prieſtley.---What hath

been ſaid of virtue is, in an inverted order, equally applicable to vice.

"A ſolution, continues he, analogous to the above, may be given to the objection taken from the motion of merit and demerit." *i. e.* That the term merit ſhould be applied to the above mechanical virtuous actions, and that of demerit to the bad ones; as a good watch is virtuous, and ſo merits, or as a bad one is vicious, and ſo demerits.---Manifeſtly, a ſcheme, which thus widens the boundaries of virtue and religion, is far preferable to that untracted ſyſtem, which confines every good practice merely to the rational or intelligent part of the creation!

As the Doctor in his reply to his eighth objection, namely that mechaniſm makes God the author of ſin, candidly allows, "That it ſeems equally difficult, in every way, to account for the origin of evil, natural or moral, conſiſtently with the infinity of the power, knowledge and goodneſs of God;" it is needleſs, I ſhould enter any further on the queſtion, than juſt to obſerve, that in the ſyſtem of mechaniſm, God is really the author

author of all evil, moral and natural, (if by the bye in ſuch a ſyſtem there can be either any moral good or evil at all); whilſt in our ſentiment, natural evil alone ariſes from his diſpoſition of things, and the moral belongs ſolely to man, who by the free abuſe of his faculties, deviates from eſtabliſhed order. The difficulty on our ſide is to ſhew, why God made us free, when he foreſaw the abuſe we ſhould make of the granted favour----The ſubſtance of the ninth objection and reply hath been conſidered already in my obſervations on the nature and influence of motives. Now comes the enumeration of ſix conſequences from his doctrine, which our philoſopher eſteems very ſtrong preſumptions in its favour.

Firſt, "It removes the great difficulty of reconciling the preſcience of God with the free-will of man."---This is certainly true, becauſe it annihilates every thing like free-will.

Secondly, "It hath a tendency to beget the moſt profound humility and ſelf-annihilation."---This is again true, if aſſociations

have been formed productive of ſuch affections; otherwiſe, it hath an equal tendency to beget the moſt conſummate pride and ſelf-importance.

Thirdly, "It hath a tendency to abate all reſentment againſt men."---Or to generate the moſt inveterate hatred and animoſity. The reaſon for that inference is curious; "Since," ſays he, "all that they do againſt us is by the appointment of God, it is rebellion againſt him to be offended with them,"---Of how flagrant an act of rebellion was then lately guilty a certain reverend philoſopher, who, becauſe a poor labouring Chymiſt had innocently taken to himſelf the honour of a few *airy* diſcoveries, announced publicly his reſentment, and threatened the raſh *plagiariſt* with all the vengeance of offended dignity!

Fourthly, "It greatly favours the doctrine of univerſal reſtoration. Since all that is done is by the appointment of God, it cannot but end well at laſt."---The Doctor is at leaſt willing, it ſeems, to make ſome amends for having deprived man of his liberty; and I am

ſure,

ſure, he is entitled to the warmeſt thanks of gratitude from the black liſt of murderers, robbers and hypocrites; whatever the good and virtuous may ſay, for his thus admitting to a participation of their happineſs ſuch a lawleſs rabble, or for giving ſo open a countenance to preſent crimes, by a promiſe, that all, ſhall at laſt end well.

Fifthly, "It hath a tendency to make us labour more earneſtly with ourſelves and others, particularly children, from the greater certainty attending all endeavours, that operate in a mechanical way."---But, I ſuſpect, it will be found, that the friend to liberty may labour with equal earneſtneſs, ſince he knows that his endeavours and inſtructions on the minds of children operate as powerfully, as in the Neceſſarian Syſtem. He hath moreover advantage on his ſide, that he knows it is in his power to amend what is wrong in himſelf, and contribute to do the ſame in others.

Laſtly, "There are many well-known paſſages of ſcripture, which cannot be reconciled to the doctrine of free-will, without the greateſt harſhneſs of interpretation."---And there

there are alſo many well-known paſſages infinitely more irreconcileable with the doctrine of mechaniſm.---*Ne ſutor ultra crepidam.* What hath a philoſopher to do in the high regions of theology?

In his next ſection the Doctor aſſerts; "Religion pre-ſuppoſes free-will in the popular and practical ſenſe; *i. e.* it pre-ſuppoſes a voluntary power over our affections and actions."---Were I not by this time pretty well acquainted with his mode of expreſſion, I ſhould be inclined to think, from the ſection before me, that the Doctor had really forgotten himſelf, or was ſeriouſly aiming to overſet the whole ſyſtem, he had eſtabliſhed; ſo gravely does he inculcate the neceſſity of voluntary operations, and of a power, the ſoul ſhould retain over her affections and actions.---"Religion," adds he, p. 347, "being the regulation of our affections and actions according to the will of God, it pre-ſuppoſes that after this will is made known to us, and we in conſequence thereof, become deſirous of complying with it, ſufficient power of complying with it ſhould be put into our hands."---Never was any thing more

more orthodox; for to require of man the practice of any virtue or abſtinence from vice, is clearly pre-ſuppoſing, that he poſſeſſes the powers of executing, what is required. The contrary ſuppoſition is too abſurd to be thought of. But it remains to be conſidered, whether, in the mechanical ſcheme, man is really in poſſeſſion of this voluntary power.

An action, as hath been already noticed in a former letter, is called *voluntary* by Dr. Hartley, when it proceeds *immediately* from ideas and affections, in contradiction to that which follows from the bodily mechaniſm, and is therefore ſaid to be *involuntary* or *automatic*.---Were all our actions of the latter kind, we could not be ſuppoſed to have any regulating power over them; and ſuch they really are in the ſyſtem of neceſſity. For though voluntary and involuntary actions are maintained by the Doctor to ſpring from different ſources, the firſt from the mind, and the ſecond from the body, ſtill if they both fall *neceſſarily*, they are both equally out of a man's own power. Actions from ideas flow as neceſſarily and mechanically, by the force

of

of aſſociation, as do the automatic ones from the muſcular agitation. In fact, they are both generated by a ſimilar ſeries of cauſes: for though it may be imagined, that voluntary actions originate from the mind; yet as the ſtate of mind is itſelf produced by vibratory motions, they are theſe ſame nervous motions, that by being aſſociated with the parts allotted to voluntary action, communicate their influence to them, and thus cauſe their action. At all events, as I have juſt ſaid, as both kinds of actions follow mechanically the impulſe of their reſpective cauſes, they are both neceſſary, and conſequently not in our power: therefore hath not man a power over his actions and affections, and therefore religion, in the mechanical ſyſtem, cannot preſuppoſe free-will in the popular and practical ſenſe, unleſs it be granted that religion can pre-ſuppoſe an abſurdity.---If this reaſoning be not deciſive againſt Dr. Hartley, I am willing to give up all pretenſions to the leaſt atom of common ſenſe, and fairly ſubmit to be claſſed in the ſame rank of being with the pen I write with.---However that religion may be a rational ſcheme, it is requiſite, that men ſhould have a capacity of complying with

with its injuctions. On this Dr. Hartley inſiſts; but in his ſentiment it is impoſſible: therefore again, either religion requires no ſuch capacity, or if it does, the Neceſſarian Syſtem is falſe. Chuſe, Sir, which you pleaſe.

In the ſucceeding ſection the Doctor ſtill advances in his religious enquiries, and aſſerts that "religion does not pre-ſuppoſe free-will in the philoſophical ſenſe."---Should this be true, then are religion and liberty eternally divorced. *Practical free-will* I have juſt proved to be chimerical; and, if your philoſopher can ſupport his preſent aſſertion, alſo is *philoſophical liberty* equally fanciful.---As the arguments adduced, in this ſection, againſt the union of religion with philoſophical free-will, are, in ſubſtance, the ſame, as have been already examined, I ſhall decline all minute diſcuſſion of them. Indeed, if free-will in its *common acceptation*, as I have proved, be not only not abſurd, but even eſſential to the exiſtence of many human actions; and if religion, according to Hartley, neceſſarily pre-ſuppoſe a voluntary power over our affections and actions; then does it evidently follow that man is free, and all farther enquiry

into the ſubject is rendered nugatory. It may be proper, however, to add a word or two.

The firſt part of this ſection is taken up in ſhewing, that *popular* liberty ſuffices for all the purpoſes of virtue and vice, blame and praiſe, reward and puniſhment, as well from the hand of man, as of God. But as popular liberty is no liberty at all; the ſum of the whole diſcourſe only ſerves to prove, that virtue and vice are nominally different, being both neceſſary and mechanical effects; that blame and praiſe are no otherwiſe equitable, than as they may be applied to the common affections of bodies; and that man may puniſh the breach of laws in his own defence, as he would endeavour to obſtruct the action of any other cauſe, that ſhould hurt him, or endanger his life. But then the Almighty, who is out of the reach of all injury from his creatures, cannot in juſtice inflict puniſhment on man, for the commiſſion of crimes, any more than he could reaſonably puniſh a ſtone, that ſhould fall, and thereby cruſh either a muſhroom or a man.

As philoſophers, ſays the Doctor, we are able to talk conſiſtently and clearly on theſe ſubjects; "For, properly ſpeaking, virtue and vice are to actions, what ſecondary qualities are to natural bodies; *i. e.* only ways of expreſſing the relation, which they bear to happineſs and miſery, juſt as ſecondary qualities are modifications of the primary ones, &c."---As the ſecondary qualities therefore are nothing real, but mere phenomena; ſuch are alſo virtue and vice; mere compoſitions and decompoſitions of natural good and evil. This is talking conſiſtently and clearly, as becomes philoſophers.

A little more philoſophy: "Since all the actions of men proceed ultimately from God, the one univerſal cauſe; we muſt, according to this language, annihilate ſelf and aſcribe all to God. But then, ſince vice, ſin, &c. are only modifications and compoſitions of natural evil, according to the ſame language, this will be only to aſcribe natural evil to him, and, if the balance of natural good be infinite, then even this natural evil will be abſorbed and annihilated by it."---It will

Like Aaron's ſerpent ſwallow all the reſt.

Vive la philoſophie! This is putting an end to vice and ſin in a very maſterly manner.---He then warns us againſt the indiſcriminate uſe of popular and philoſophical language; that, if applied ſeparately in their diſtinct provinces, all will be juſt and fair; but if confounded together, a thouſand abſurdities will from all ſides flow in upon us. In other words, we are to underſtand, that, according to vulgar conceptions, vice and virtue, religion and morality are ſomething, but that, in the eye of a philoſopher, all their diſtinction, and even reality vaniſhes; they become mere ſhadows or appearances, as is the world itſelf, and all its appurtenances, when viewed through the philoſophical medium.

Why a benevolent Creator gave free-will to man, which he foreſaw would be to his unhappineſs and ruin, I can aſſign no other reaſon, than that ſuch a being entered into his general plan of exiſtence. But this difficulty is not diminiſhed in the ſyſtem of neceſſity---what, may it here be aſked, hath philoſophy to do with the inſcrutable deſigns of providence? The *cælum ipſum petimus*

mus ſtultitia, it appears, ſhould be the general motto to almoſt every performance of our modern reaſoners.---To ſcreen myſelf a little from the perſonal application of that ſevere reflection, I will here add in reply to another ſimilar difficulty urged by Dr. Hartley, that, as a philoſopher, I know nothing of the *eternity* of miſery or happineſs hereafter. The conviction, that virtue will be rewarded, and vice puniſhed, in the moſt exact proportion to each, by a God of infinite juſtice and goodneſs, gives me ample ſatisfaction. Indeed, the idea of a general renovation is a neceſſary conſequence from the ſyſtem of mechaniſm; but that probably, in the minds of many, will not greatly contribute to enforce its belief.

"The natural attributes of God," ſays the Doctor, in his title to ſect. iv. "or his infinite power and knowledge, exclude the poſſibility of free-will." His proof is; "for to ſuppoſe that man hath a power independent of God, is to ſuppoſe that God's power does not extend to all things, *i. e.* is not infinite."

To

To elucidate this difficult point as far as I am able, I beg leave to obſerve, that though it be requiſite, that every creature depend of its maker; yet it ſeems, this dependency may be ſufficiently preſerved, in the hypotheſis of man being the real and phyſical cauſe of his own operations.---All dependency is not eſſentially alike: the log of wood, void of every power or faculty to act, and that requires an external impulſe to put in motion, is undoubtedly dependent. But muſt every other being be thus ſervilely dependent? or, is not that creature more perfect in its kind, which, after it hath received its exiſtence and analagous attributes from its maker, with them alſo receives the grant of uſing its allotted powers, and of conforming thereby to the order and harmony of a ſubordinate and graduated ſyſtem? Such a being is man: nor thus privileged is he withdrawn from due ſubjection to his creator, whilſt in his proper department, by the free exertion of his faculties, he as faithfully fulfils the will of heaven, as the inferior myriads of beings, which, each in their ſphere, obey the general laws of impulſe or gravitation. Man, therefore, poſſeſſes no power independent of God; though

though eminently raiſed in the ſcale of exiſtence, he operates in a manner ſuperior to the emmet, or the loadſtone. All his actions belong to God, with the greateſt propriety of expreſſion, becauſe they all proceed from the exerciſe of powers, which were given him by his maker.

Nor is free-will leſs conſiſtent with the knowledge, than with the infinite power of Almighty God. The great and good author of the *Religion of nature delineated* hath with his uſual preciſion and depth of reaſoning thrown as much light on this myſterious ſubject, as can be ſeriouſly deſired. I make no apology for the quotation.---"There is indeed (p. 102) a common prejudice againſt the *preſcience* (as it is called) of God; which ſuggeſts that, if God foreknows things, he foreknows them infallibly or *certainly:* and if ſo, then they are certain: and if certain, then they are no longer matter of *Freedom.* And thus preſcience and freedom are inconſiſtent. But ſure the nature of things is not changed by being known, or known beforehand. For if it is known truly, it is known to be what it is; and therefore is not altered by this. The truth

truth is, God foreſees, or rather ſees the actions of free agents, becauſe they *will be*; not that they will be becauſe he *foreſees them*. If I ſee an object in a certain place, the veracity of my faculties ſuppoſed, it is *certain* that object is there; but yet it cannot be ſaid, it is there *becauſe* I ſee it there, or that my ſeeing it there is the *cauſe* of its being there: but becauſe it is *there*, therefore I ſee it there. It is the object that determines my ſenſation: and ſo in the other caſe, it is a future *choice* of a free agent, that determines the preſcience, which yet may be infallibly true. Let us put theſe two contradictory propoſitions, B (ſome particular perſon) *will go to Church next Sunday*, and B *will not go to Church next Sunday*, and let us ſuppoſe withall, that B is *free*, and that his going or not going, depends merely on his *own will*. In this caſe he may, indeed, do either, but yet he can do but *one* of thoſe two things, either *go* or *not go*; and one he muſt do. One of theſe propoſitions is therefore now *true*; but yet it is not the truth of that propoſition, which forces him *to do* what is contained in it: on the contrary, the truth of the propoſition ariſes from what he ſhall *chooſe* to do. And if that truth does not force him,

the *foreknowledge* of that truth will not. We may ſure ſuppoſe B himſelf to *know certainly* before hand, which of the two he will chooſe to do, whether to go to church or not (I mean ſo far as it depends upon his choice only); and if ſo, then here is B's own *foreknowledge* conſiſtent with his freedom: and if we can but further ſuppoſe God to know *as much* in this reſpect as B does, there will be God's *foreknowledge* conſiſtent with B's *freedom*." — a fair reply to this reaſoning of Mr. Wollaſton would pleaſe me greatly.

Dr. Hartley finally concludes by ſpecifying the practical tendency of his doctrine to promote humility and ſelf contempt, in oppoſition to that of liberty, as naturally productive of pride and ſelf-conceit. But as he at length ingenuouſly owns that, "as the aſſertors of Philoſophical free-will *are not* neceſſarily proud, ſo the aſſertors of the doctrine of mechaniſm are *much leſs* neceſſarily humble;" we have clearly the advantage over them in point of humility. And, as though the good Doctor, in a fit of holy zeal, were determined, by one daſh of his pen, totally to annihilate all he boaſted excellen-

cies and ſuperior advantages of mechaniſm, he immediately ſubjoins by way of proof to the above obſervation: "for however they (the neceſſarians) may, in theory, aſcribe all to God; yet the aſſociations of life beget the idea and opinion of *ſelf* again and again, refer actions to this ſelf, and connect a variety of applauſes and complacencies with theſe actions." But where ſuch aſſociations are formed, pride and ſelf-conceit are the neceſſary reſult; and as theſe aſſociations ariſe *again and again* in life, what room is there for humility and ſelf-annihilation? Therefore hath the doctrine of mechaniſm, from the Doctor's own confeſſion, a general tendency to cauſe and ſupport the vices of pride, vanity, ſelf-conceit, and contempt of our fellowcreatures; and, I wiſh to God, theſe were the only evils, which that doctrine is calculated to generate, and immoveably rivet in the human breaſt.---Conſequences ſo deleterious---*la tête me tourne*---I am tired to death with the matter and length of this letter; therefore Rev. Sir, farewell.

April 10, 1776.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

REVEREND SIR,

FATIGUED and exhauſted, as I told you, with the length of my laſt letter, I had determined there to cloſe my correſpondence, and take my final leave of the ſubject and of you. But nothing, ſurely, is more changeable than the human heart! One night's reſt recruited my ſpirits: I again reſolved to purſue my metaphyſical journey. Give me, Sir, your attention a few moments longer, and I will releaſe you---perhaps for ever.---It is, indeed, a matter of very little conſequence,

either to you or the public to know, what are my ſentiments relative to the ſubject of the human mind. Such, however, as they are, you ſhall have them. Deign, good Sir, to caſt a tranſient glance, as they rapidly paſs, in review before you, like the whimſical figures, which, I dare ſay, you have often ſeen, and perhaps laughed at, exhibited by the humble experimenters on the magic lantern.

Elated with the thoughts of having gained a victory over Hartley and yourſelf, had I there ſat down, ſolely intent on the bloody proſpect of the field, I might have been called a deſtroyer---the appellation pleaſed me not. Only the ſavage mind delights in the work of deſtruction.-----But, all farce and ſentiment aſide, I am willing to draw you out a ſhort ſketch of my own notions, which I flatter myſelf you will ſay are conſiſtent and rational enough. Indeed, from what has already accidentally fallen from me, you have been able to collect the main ſubſtance of my thoughts.

Man is a mixed being, a compound of two ſubſtances eſſentially different, *matter* and *ſoul*.

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The ſoul is a ſubſtance in nature *ſimple* and *highly active*, *ſenſitive*, *perceptive*, *cogitative* and *rational*: it is united to a body, curiouſly organized, whoſe conſtituent elements are likewiſe *ſimple* and *active* in an inferior degree, but *inſenſitive*, *imperceptive*, *incogitative*, and *irrational*. Great, therefore, is the heterogeneity of theſe two partners; but they are intimately united, according to a pre-eſtabliſhed ſyſtem, from whence reſults a moſt perfect and exact accord. The diſpoſitions and conſtitutional attributes of the one are attempered to the character of the other. They mutually and *phyſically* act upon each other. ---When the bodily organs have acquired a due degree of ſtrength and elaſticity, then their reſpective nervous ſyſtems, in conſequence of impreſſions received from external objects, are put in motion; this motion, whether of a vibratory or of any other kind, is tranſmitted to the ſoul, and the ſoul is correſpondently affected. Every ſuch affection is a *ſenſation*. Theſe increaſe in number and variety, as increaſe and vary the number and quality of impreſſions. Thus is the infant mind modified into a thouſand different forms

or

mind in thinking.---Now, Sir, let us ſhake hands, for we are going to be widely ſeparated.

The ſole faculty of *perceiving* ideas, as they riſe, is, as I have often obſerved, according to your theory, all that man can boaſt of. The mind of the greateſt and moſt learned man may by you be very juſtly compared to an elaborate and very extenſive literary performance, to an Encyclopedia or a Chamber's dictionary, in which are delineated innumerable ideas; and the mental ſtock is acquired and arranged in as mechanical a manner, as are the words of a book, from the artful aſſociation of the printer's types. The ſoul ſits an idle ſpectatrix of the buſineſs, that is carrying on under her eyes; and, ever chained down to her fated deſtiny, is forced to engage in every ſcene, good or bad, pleaſing or painful, as the nervous vibrations direct.

I have ſaid that, beſides the faculty of perception, I conceive the human mind to be gifted with various other powers, which gradually or progreſſively riſe into action, as their proper objects preſent themſelves. Theſe powers,

powers, though congenial with our being, remain dormant in the ſoul, till they are in due time and circumſtances, called forth.--- Other powers we may alſo poſſeſs, which are deſtined never to be diſplayed, till we enter upon a new world, of greater beauty and perfection.---The firſt modifications the mind receives are *ſenſations*; their analogous or correſpondent parts are, *perceiving*, *liking* or *diſliking*, *diſtinguiſhing*, and *attending*. Theſe faculties, as I have already ſhewn againſt Dr. Hartley, cannot be the direct effects of any nervous vibrations; conſequently they are to be conſidered as certain mental attributes, which, according to a pre-determined ſyſtem, are deſigned to make their appearance, when ſuch or ſuch ſenſations are produced. Of what uſe would a thouſand inſulated ſenſations be, if there did not within us exiſt ſome property, which might feel their preſence, and be intereſted in their pleaſing or painful mode of operation?

The faculties or rather properties, juſt mentioned, are ſubordinate, however, to ſenſations; they riſe mechanically, whenever the latter appear. They are common to us

and the extenſive animal world, but varied, and gradually more or leſs perfect, as are their reſpective poſſeſſors. As the ſenſations of an oyſter are fewer in number, and probably leſs acute than thoſe of the monkey or the elephant; alſo his perceptive, attentive and diſtinguiſhing powers are reſpectively of an inferior kind. For the firſt years of man's exiſtence, he appears, in no reſpect above the common level of animal life; as all his mental affections are merely ſenſations, or the moſt ſimple and unaſſociated ſenſitive ideas, he can as yet have exerciſed no capacity, but what is appropriated to that inferior claſs of affections. But as his organs become more perfectly formed, their fibres vibrate to new impreſſions, from a more exalted order of objects, and a conſequent train of ideas is generated. Now are called forth new powers, and the great work of reaſoning and of voluntary life commences.---The ideas, I am ſpeaking of, are termed *intellectual*, and are produced by language, verbal or ſymbolical.

But it may be aſked; if on the firſt appearance of certain ideas, the ſuperior faculties, I am going to exhibit, are mechanically excited

excited, wherein can be placed that free, internal, and ſelf-determining power, I mean to eſtabliſh?

When the mind is furniſhed with a ſufficient ſtore of Ideas, or to ſpeak more properly, when certain collections of fibres begin to vibrate in a manner excitative of intellectual ideas, then are developed the reſponſive powers of *reaſon*. But as in every other line, here alſo the work is carried on by ſlow and progreſſive marches. The firſt glimmerings of reaſon are, moſt probably, automatic, if reaſon in its embryo ſtate be made to conſiſt in the tranſient compariſon of two ideas. Though I am rather inclined to think, that every compariſon is a voluntary action; becauſe it cannot be proved, that whenever the mind perceives the preſence of ideas, then it is always neceſſitated to compare ſuch ideas, with one another. But whatever may be determined of the *firſt appearance* of the intellectual powers, it is to me clear, that they gradually become more and more voluntary, as they are the oftener exerciſed, and as the ſeveral bodily organs

and members acquire a greater aptneſs to receive and communicate motion.

When pleaſing ideas are firſt preſented to the infant mind, as their number is but ſmall, they are eagerly and almoſt mechanically attended to. But as the ſtock is varied and encreaſed, the mental objects are multiplied, and we are rather pleaſed with ſhifting our attention, and with playing from one idea to another.---The faculty, not merely of *attending*, (for that ſeems to be, more or leſs, a neceſſary conſequence of the preſence of ideas, and perhaps may be nothing more than a *continued perception*) but of varying our attention, and of paſſing from one ſet of ideas to another, ſeems to be a very leading and important attribute of the human mind.

At a time, when a variety of ideas are preſent, ſome painful, ſome pleaſing, and others differently featured, (unleſs there be any ſo ſtrongly marked and ſtimulant as to force themſelves excluſively upon us) we enjoy the eaſy power, and really exerciſe it, of moving from one to the other, of ſometimes contemplating the variegated collection, and

and then of fondly fixing the attention on ſome favourite ſcene. Here the mind for a time chuſes to dwell: we feel a kind of expanſive energy unfold itſelf, and the ideal colouring becomes more glowing and expreſſive.---The laſt effect is produced by an accelerated motion communicated to the fibres then in play; that is, the mind, in its ſtate of attention, *reacts* upon the moving fibres, heightens their vibrations, and the mental effects are thus rendered more intenſe ---To a ſtate of fixed attention ſoon ſucceeds a very ſenſible degree of laſſitude, which ſtill more ſtrongly confirms my notion, that the nervous ſyſtem was greatly agitated; and this could only be effected in the manner juſt explained.---In *attention* therefore is diſplayed not only a remarkable degree of mental energy, which itſelf raiſes man far above that torpid ſtate, you are ſo inclined to admire; but alſo evinces the exiſtence of a ſelf-determining or elective power, which I conceive to be the nobleſt attribute of man.

The power of moving in a manner, termed *voluntary*, I admit in its moſt extenſive ſignification Indeed, every ſpecies of motion in man, external and internal, which is not

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immediately produced by the application of ſtimuli, or by impulſion, I reſolve with Dr. Whytte of Edinburgh into the action of the ſoul. As to voluntary muſcular motion, which is now my object, it muſt neceſſarily, *as ſuch*, proceed from the determining influence of an internal principle. Every mechanical effect, call it improperly as you pleaſe, is of the ſame nature, purely automatic; nor can the arbitrary diſtinction of voluntary and involuntary alter the internal character of human actions. As then we are interiorly convinced of ſome real difference in our own actions; this can only be accounted for, by aſcribing ſome to the immediate influence of the will, whilſt others are derived from other cauſes.---The mind, from the conſiderate view of the ideas before her, *judges* it proper, for inſtance, to raiſe the hand to the head; the action inſtantly follows, effected by a degree of motion communicated to the nerves in connexion with the muſcles of the arm. How, and with what degree of force to move thoſe fibres, hath been learnt by experience. Their firſt motion was, moſt probably, automatic, from the application of ſtimuli. The ſtate of mind

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immediately previous to this action I alſo with Dr. Hartley call the *will*; but *my will* is not a bare paſſive ſtate; it is an active exertion of force, from whence follow the viſible effects of motion, juſt deſcribed.

The intellectual pains and pleaſures in all their combinations, and all the modes of the paſſions through their innumerable gradations, I conceive with you, to be the mechanical effects of vivid vibrations and of aſſociations, abſtracting always from the capacity of perceiving and attending to ſuch emotions. Moreover, all ſuch affections are ever ulteriorly accompanied by ſome one or other mental attribute, of a nature totally diſtinct from them.

The ſame obſervations are equally applicable to the different ſtates of mind, termed *reflecting*, *heſitating*, *believing* or *aſſenting*, *diſſenting*, &c.; which, as hath been already noticed, cannot poſſibly be reſolved into the ſolitary *perception* of ideas. They are, undoubtedly, diſtinct faculties, which ſeverally act, as their reſpective objects determine. To reflect is not to believe, nor is believing diſſenting.

ſenting. They all belong to the grand principle of *reaſon*, which, in every regular proceſs, as it advances from known truths to farther diſcoveries, diſplays all its ſubordinate forces. For a moment, Sir, return back on your own mind; there review ſome one ſeries of reaſoning, you have purſued to its utmoſt ſtretch. You will firſt perceive riſing before you a few brilliant ideas, whoſe accord and evident relation flaſhes upon the mind; to them you give an eaſy and tranſient *attention*. Theſe are inſtantly followed by others, which ſeem to germinate, as it were, from the firſt, but their mutual relation is not ſo ſtriking, they are attended however by a few adventitious auxiliaries, which conſpire to illumine the leading ideas; when again you perceive their coincidence, and another member of evidence or of truth appears. To the ſecond a third aſſortment of ideas ſucceeds, which are ſtill more complicated and involved in obſcurity.

Here the mind begins to *heſitate*, to *analyſe*, to *compare*, to *view* and *review*, to *reject*, and rapidly to perform a hundred different evolutions; till at laſt, a certain arrangement takes

takes place, and a farther branch of truth is perceived. The proceſs ſtill goes on, and at every remove, more and more difficulties ariſe---finally, the diſtant ſcene gradually clears up, and the object, ſo long and ſo laboriouſly ſought for, is diſcovered. It may be the exiſtence of a firſt moving cauſe; or the natural immortality of man; or it may be the appearance of one great comprehenſive law, calculated to govern both the material and intellectual world.

In this one ſeries of reaſoning is diſcoverable, by a ſingle glance, the whole extent and evidence of the ſyſtem, I am laying before you.---In the firſt place appears the truth of the doctrine of the mechanical aſſociation of ideas; they are ſeen to riſe up in the mind, in that order, and accompanied by thoſe adventitious adjuncts and diſtinctive *traits*, which time, and experience, and circumſtances of life, have annexed to them. In the forming of this ideal or objectual ſcene, the mind hath no concern; it is throughout the effect of nervous vibrations and analogous or relative aſſociations.---In the ſecond view are diſplayed the higher mental faculties, ſo different, in kind and mode of operation,

from the ſingle property of *perception*, which you and Dr. Hartley eſteem excluſive by ſufficient. They are the leading powers of a *rational* being, on which, his very eſſential character, as ſuch, depends. Not ſubject to any neceſſitating or impulſive influence, they *freely* act from a ſelf-determining energy, attempered to their nature, as the proper objects are preſented; or *by choice* they ſuſpend their work, and break off their operations. But they are ſubordinate to one another; or rather, there appears to be one leading and maſter power, that of the *will*, or choice, which rules and governs the whole.

When ideas, indeed, are preſent, they muſt be *perceived*; nor can this perception, by any poſſible exertion of the will, be ever ſuſpended; but I am not neceſſitated to engage in any diſcurſive proceſs, let the ideas be ever ſo preſent and vivid. Ideas are, undoubtedly, eſſentially requiſite for all mental operation; but they force not the mind mechanically after them; much leſs are they, as you fancy, at once the objects of thought and the thinking ſubſtance. As without a proper apparatus, it would not be in your power, to exhibit the

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ſurpriſing phenomena of the electric fluid; ſo neither could I purſue the moſt trifling chain of argumentation, without a proper choice of ideas: but as you will ſcarcely aſſert that your performing electrical experiments is *neceſſarily* and *unavoidably* connected with the very exiſtence of the apparatus, though the latter be a *neceſſary condition*; in the ſame manner I inſiſt that I am *free* to *reaſon* or not, when ideas, the eſſential condition to argumentation, are preſent to my mind.

It is at preſent unneceſſary to enter more fully into the merits of this theory, as my only deſign was, ſuccinctly to draw you out a ſketch of my ideas. But I have ſaid enough, I hope, to make my meaning clear; at leaſt it will be ſufficiently ſo, when the contents of this letter are joined to what has been incidentally ſaid in other letters, particularly the VIIth. You ſee, Sir, how eaſy it would now be to extend my views, by working upon a larger and more comprehenſive ſcale. I flatter myſelf you will give ſome ſmall attention to the matter before you. It poſſeſſes at once all the advantages of Dr. Hartly's ſyſtem, relative to the aſſociation of ideas, and

moreover ſecures to man thoſe privileges, he ſeems, by his rank of being, to be intitled to above the reſt of the creation.

I pretend not to take any glory to myſelf, as having made any new diſcovery: that would be vain indeed. The ſyſtem I propoſe is no other than the original doctrine of Mr. Locke, exhibited, perhaps, in a more ſtriking and leſs complex point of view. It is open, I know, to ſome objections; and all I deſire is that it may paſs for what it is intrinſically worth, and no more. Should it by you or others be deemed an object deſerving of more attention and a fuller delineation, I may poſſibly, ſome time or other, attempt it, and make a general application of my ideas to the whole mental œconomy, regularly purſuing, as far as I may be able, the ſteps, which Dr. Hartley has marked out to me.---Farewell.

April 10, 1776.

LETTER

LETTER X.

REVEREND SIR,

OPPORTUNELY enough, though you perhaps may think far otherwiſe, before my laſt letter was completely printed, accidentally fell into my hands your laſt volume of *Experiments on different kinds of air.* I had purpoſely put off the peruſal of that volume to a more convenient opportunity, my head being a good deal engaged in purſuits widely different from the ſubject matter of thoſe enquiries. Yet I was deſirous to ſee one part of

of your *preface*, in which, I had been informed, you had taken very ſerious notice of the reflections that had been made, relative to your notions on the *materiality of ſouls*. Perhaps, thought I, the Doctor hath candidly acknowledged the opinion, he hazarded on that ſubject, to be ill-founded, and hath therefore publicly apologized for the alarm, he unthinkingly gave to the ſincere admirers of real virtue and religion; if ſo, what I have written on the ſubject muſt prove in a great meaſure uſeleſs, and I will fairly ſuppreſs my *letters on materialiſm*, or, at leaſt, make a handſome excuſe for the warmth of ſome expreſſions, and the perſonal tendency of others. With theſe thoughts I turned toyour preface; but how great was my ſurpriſe, when inſtead of an apology, I beheld the ſame ſentiment as ſtrongly expreſſed as ever, and perceived that your mind was obſtinately reſolved to abide by the firſt aſſertion!

To make ſome few reflexions on that part of your preface is the deſign of this letter, which ſhall poſitively be my laſt. Do not fear, I ſhall copy the ſtale trick of rope-dancers and other performers of wonders, who announce

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one night more, and poſitively no longer, when they mean no ſuch thing. Poſitively then, Doctor, I again aſſure you, this ſhall be my parting diſcourſe.

You ſeem not a little mortified by the report, which has gone forth to the public, ſo injurious to your ſacerdotal character, repreſenting you, after all your manœuvres in defence of religion, as not believing in a future ſtate. To effect this baſe purpoſe, ſay you, a mutilated ſentence was quoted from your *eſſays*; and thus was your innocent and Chriſtian meaning moſt wilfully and wickedly perverted. Fie upon you, Mr. Seton; how could you thus maliciouſly and wantonly aſperſe the immaculate reputation of a man, whoſe coat of orthodoxy was ever eſteemed of one uniform and ſeamleſs tiſſue!

The paſſage, Sir, which gave riſe to the report, you deem ſo injurious, hath been quoted *entire* in more than a hundred different places, ſince its firſt appearance from Mr. Johnſon's ſhop; and what will be ever a very untoward circumſtance is, that Mr. Seton's inference hath conſtantly been drawn againſt you, to wit,

wit, that in your opinion the human ſoul, is *naturally mortal*. But this is the very doctrine, you meant in your eſſay to eſtabliſh, this you again repeat in your preface, and this was the only aſſertion, with which you was charged by Mr. Seton, or by any other writer on the ſubject. Wherein then was your meaning ſo *wilfully* and *wickedly* perverted? You ſay indeed, that you have been "repreſented in an artful *advertiſement* as not believing in a future ſtate"; and of this you complain bitterly; *hinc illæ lacrymæ*. If hereby you mean to inſinuate that Mr. Seton accuſed you of rejecting *all belief* in a future ſtate, take care, Sir, you be not yourſelf guilty of, at leaſt, a *wilful* perverſion of that gentleman's meaning. He never aimed to go beyond the limits of your own aſſertion, (for that was quite far enough) which is, that relying on the reaſons, deduced from philoſophy *alone*, it is more probable that man will not ſurvive the grave. For the truth of this I refer you to Mr. Seton's own letter, addreſſed to you in the London review of June, 1775. Your theological or divine faith of *future exiſtence* was never called in queſtion, becauſe you declared that you had hopes of ſurviving the grave, derived to you

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from the *ſcheme of revelation*, or from a *poſitive conſtitution*, communicated by expreſs revelation to man. As therefore his only deſign was to controvert and to point out the evil tendency of the firſt inſinuation, where was the neceſſity of quoting more of your eſſay than the lines, wherein that inſinuation or rather aſſertion was contained. Nor certainly was he blameable for laying to your charge an opinion, which you then openly promulgated, and are now determined to maintain. This is a fair repreſentation of the matter. Review the entire eſſay, or only take the curtailed paſſage, as quoted by Mr. Seton, the inference againſt you, as far as any one has hitherto inſinuated, muſt be exactly the ſame.—But perhaps, Sir, the caſe is, that Dr. Prieſtley hath a right to aſſert, what no other man may repeat, or lay to his charge, without incurring the guilt of a malicious and wicked ſlanderer.

"This affair, you ſay, has been the occaſion of much exultation among *bigots*, as a proof that freedom of thinking in matters of religion leads to infidelity; and *unbelievers*, who have never read any but my philo-

ſophical writings, conſider me as one of their fraternity. To the former I ſhall ſay nothing, becauſe it would avail nothing."

It would pleaſe me much to hear *your own* definition of the word *bigotry*; becauſe I think it would be curious, and probably be infinitely more extenſive in its application, than was ever before imagined. Should you confine it to thoſe, who declare againſt freedom of thinking, or rather free enquiry in matters of religion, you would not, I fancy, be oppoſed by the rational part of believers. The *rationale* of religion not only admits of, but even requires a free and candid diſcuſſion of the ſubject; which muſt always tend to the diſcovery and confirmation of truth, and to the detection and deſtruction of error and falſhood. But a degree of deference to the ſentiments and even prejudices of others ſhould be ever preſerved; nor can a man be too diffident of the workings of his own reaſon, or too moderate and circumſpect in what he delivers out to the multitude. "*Quiconque* (ſays a virtuous foreigner, who is no bigot) *s'intéreſſe plus au bonheur des hommes qu'à ſa propre gloire, ne ſe haſardera pas à dire ſon avis ſur*

ſur des préjugés, qui contribuent a faire éclorre le germe de la virtue, et a répandre le repos et la félicité parmi ſes ſemblables."

Your religious addreſs to *unbelievers*, particularly foreigners, who have kindly, as you obſerve, admitted you into their fraternity, deſerves ſome notice. Of theſe you entertain better hopes than of bigots. "As they will agree with me in the opinion of the *natural mortality of the ſoul*, which is agreeable to every appearance in nature, ſay you, it greatly concerns *us* to conſider, &c." *i. e.* whether the deity has not by ſome *poſitive revelation* pointed out an *hereafter* to man.---Moſt undoubtedly, if they have adopted your opinion, it nearly concerns them to look out for ſome ſecurity, ſome other proof of exiſtence in a world to come. But ſhould they remain obſtinate in their infidel ſcheme, and moreover pay ſuch deference to your ſentiments, as to declare for materialiſm; then, Doctor, what will be their fate?---you are, however, much deceived if you imagine that all foreign infidels have adopted your opinion. I could name ſome, whoſe religious faith is much leſs than a grain of muſtard ſeed, who are

ſtill warm maintainers of the ſoul's natural immortality: ſuch as that wild Orang outang J. J. Rouſſeau, of Geneva, and the famous Berlin Jew Moſes Mandels-Sohn, who have both expreſly written in defence of that doctrine. Indeed, I know not of any, who are *eminent* in the literary world, that have publicly, at leaſt, eſpouſed your ſentiment. You are, therefore, I ſuſpect, *plus iſolé* in your opinion, than you pleaſe to flatter yourſelf.

Where this is not the caſe; wherever you have found an unbelieving and *material* brother, him it behoves ſeriouſly to conſider; and if your arguments, in defence of *revelation*, are able to draw him from his infidel ſtate, I will be the laſt to controvert the validity and ſtrength of your reaſoning; nor will I ever attempt to ſhew how little it appears to me calculated to effect that benevolent and charitable purpoſe.---But as you add, that "it argues extreme narrowneſs of mind, unworthy of the ſpirit of Philoſophy, not to extend our views and inquiries beyond the circle of thoſe objects, about which *natural philoſophy* is converſant, which terminate in gain-

gaining a knowledge of the *viſible ſyſtem* of nature;" why do you not, as a *metaphyſician*, aim to riſe above this *viſible world of matter*, where you may diſcover the exiſtence and reality of other beings, whoſe ethereal forms cannot be confined in a tub of water, or a baſon of quick-ſilver; nor be extracted by friction from a globe of glaſs; nor infine be analyſed by all the powers of chymiſtry?

In the line immediately adjoined to the laſt cited paſſage you declare, that the contrary doctrine to your own, that is, the doctrine of *natural immortality*, "has no countenance from the ſcriptures."---I am not in the leaſt diſpoſed to pervert your meaning ---I am ſenſible of the enormity of the crime ---but I ſhould be exceedingly glad to know whether thoſe laſt words have any meaning at all. For if you mean to ſay that the doctrine of *natural immortality* is not itſelf, as ſuch, contained in the ſcriptures; you are, to be ſure, in the right, becauſe that doctrine, as the pure reſult of reaſon, moſt evidently is not a *revealed* truth. But if, as the words themſelves expreſs it, this doctrine hath really

really *no countenance from the ſcriptures*; then is the future exiſtence of man not only falſe in philoſophy, as you inſiſt, but likewiſe in its theological acceptation: what then becomes of that part of the ſcheme of revelation, on which you reſt all your hopes of immortality? ---but ſuch ſlips of the pen, (as has been already urged in juſtification of a ſimilar overſight) are perhaps "venial, and eaſily excuſable in the rapidity of compoſition," particularly of ſo haſty a compoſer as Dr. Prieſtley.

"The opinion (you add to a note ſubfixed to the page before me) of the *natural immortality of the ſoul*, had its origin in the heathen philoſophy; and having, with other Pagan nations, inſinuated itſelf into Chriſtianity which has been miſerably depraved by this means) has been the great ſupport of the popiſh doctrines of *purgatory*, and the *worſhip of the dead*."---That a writer, who plumes himſelf on the character of ſingular candor and ſincerity could have written a paragraph ſo replete with falſhood and wilful miſrepreſentation, is not, at leaſt a common phe-

phenomenon, in the hiſtory of the human mind!

If the opinion, Sir, of *natural immortality* had its origin in the heathen philoſophy; then certainly was that opinion a *common* point of belief in the ancient world, which however, your friends, ſince the commencement of this diſpute, have peremptorily denied. And again, if it aroſe from that quarter; then you muſt allow it to have been diſcovered by *unaſſiſted* reaſon, and conſequently this doctrine itſelf cannot be contrary to, and out of the utmoſt reach of that faculty, which you pretend is the caſe.

Your ſecond aſſertion, that that opinion, with other Pagan notions, inſinuated itſelf into Chriſtianity, is no leſs arbitrary than the former. By Chriſtianity, I ſuppoſe you mean that ſyſtem of religious belief, which is founded on the poſitive revelation of the Deity. Of this ſyſtem one principal article, according to your own creed, is *man's future exiſtence.* Why then, on

ſentiment in queſtion? Juſt with equal propriety might you aſſert that the doctrines of *hell* and *heaven* (only that they are not excluſively popiſh) are ſprung from, or at leaſt founded on the ſame opinion.

En paſſant, Doctor, give me leave to aſk, what objection you can *conſiſtently* have to the doctrine of purgatory; you who, I ſuppoſe, with Dr Hartley and others, have adopted the notion of an *univerſal reſtoration*, to take place, ſome time or other? That notion annihilates the belief of a place of *eternal* puniſhment, and conſequently eſtabliſhes a *purgatory*, upon a more extenſive and extraordinary plan indeed, than is that of Rome, but ſtill a purgatory it moſt certainly is. And if you will inſiſt that the popiſh tenet reſts on the ſentiment of *natural immortality*, by what *fineſſe* of logic will you be able to prove that your own *purgatory* is not derived or upheld by the ſame opinion?

What you would mean to ſay by the *worſhip of the dead*, another popiſh doctrine, you aſſert, ſupported by the ſame opinion, is

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to me quite a myſtery. I have been a good deal connected with Roman Catholics, both at home and abroad, but I never underſtood that *worſhipping the dead* was a part of their religion.

What opinion, think you, will your foreign friends, Father Beccaria and others, form of your candour and ſimplicity of heart, when they ſhall read this curious note?----But I beg your pardon, Sir; your friends, on the other ſide of the water, are, I ſuppoſe, moſtly of the infidel caſt; you would not, I dare ſay, be connected with *bigots* of any nation. Seriouſly, to meet with ſuch ſtale and childiſh reflexions in a work, as you tell us, addreſſed to philoſophers, gives me a very poor opinion of your ingenuouſneſs and liberal turn of mind. And with what face can you continue to brand others with the odious appellation of bigot and of enemies to free enquiry, whilſt you ſtill retain, rankling within your own breaſt, thoſe ſame ridiculous prejudices againſt the Roman, and perhaps other churches, which you firſt imbibed within the walls of your nurſery?

Here I ſhall drop the ſubject. One requeſt I have to make, which is, that as you think it deſerves your attention, you will take a ſerious review of your ideas, before you again publicly appear in your metaphyſical department. My requeſt is moderate; it cannot diſpleaſe the man, who pretends not to infallibility.

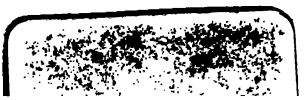
The Hartleyan doctrine is an object of the greateſt moment: its influence will be felt, as far as the wideſt ſpread of ſcience extends, becauſe its application is general. But not only the philoſopher, the divine alſo, and the magiſtrate are deeply concerned, for by it will the whole ſyſtem of moral and civil life be ſenſibly affected. Is it not then the duty of every man to take the alarm, to examine, and ſcrupulouſly analyſe the principles, and even the moſt diſtant conſequences of a ſyſtem, which, if ever generally adopted, will ſo generally, and in my opinion, ſo fatally operate? I pointed out ſome of its defects, and I ſtarted ſome objections; but much more remains to be done. Do you, Sir, take care, leſt under the

the ſpecious ſhew of being ſerviceable, you be really inſtrumental in propagating a doctrine, whereby the cauſe of *truth*, *virtue*, and *religion* may be ſeverely injured.---

Farewell.

Auguſt 1, 1776.

FINIS.

E R R A T A.

P.	86	*l.*	7	for	*be*	read	*becauſe.*
p.	107	*l.*	2	—	*disjointed*	—	*disjoined.*
p.	110	*l.*	11	—	*drawn*	—	*draw.*
p.	111	*l.*	13	—	*effect*	—	*affect*
p.	112	*l.*	4	—	*agreed*	—	*great*
p.	113	*l.*	9	—	*quandaque*	—	*quandoque*
p.	123	*l.*	11	—	*manifeſt*	—	*manifold*
p.	178	*l.*	13	—	*untracted*	—	*contracted*
p.	183	*l.*	12	—	*contradiction*	—	*contradiſtinction.*
p.	*Ibid.*	*l.*	23	—	*fall*	—	*follow*
p.	190	*l.*	10	after	*put*	—	*it*